



Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
% Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

February 25, 2026

**RE: LD 2187, An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State**

Dear Sen. Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the ENR Committee:

My name is Francesca “Ches” Gundrum and I am Maine Audubon’s Director of Advocacy. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation nonprofit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 2187, *An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State*.

As you are aware, every three years, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reviews the waters of the state and recommends improved protections for appropriate water bodies. These additional protections involve a higher level of classification, which means a higher level of protection from pollution. For instance, upgrading a Class B river to a Class A river means that wastewater dischargers are regulated more strictly to protect a broader range of uses, such as natural habitat for fish and aquatic life.

**Maine Audubon expresses our support for LD 2187 as its passage is instrumental in better protecting critical and beloved rivers and streams in Maine for generations to come.**

Through authorizing the Maine (DEP) to upgrade water quality protection and classifications, Maine will increase environmental protections for key rivers and streams across the state. These protections will continue to safeguard our environment while ensuring our rivers and streams remain available for broad uses.

In addition to our support for all proposed upgrades, Maine Audubon offers our support for upgrading the section of the Androscoggin River between Worumbo and Gulf Island Pond dams. Additionally, we support increased upgrades for the Sandy River from Phillips to Farmington and Temple Stream. Maine currently has the last remaining wild population of Atlantic Salmon in the U.S. and the Sandy River contains some of the best Atlantic Salmon habitat in the state. Because of the dramatic decline in this iconic species, it is currently listed as “Endangered” under the Endangered



Species Act (ESA). Many efforts are underway to reverse this negative trend – including this upgrade in LD 2187 represents one of many actions that would help.

Communities and ecosystems across the state will benefit from the passage of LD 2187. **We urge this Committee to support this bill and appreciate your consideration of our suggestions.** Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francesca Gundrum".

Francesca "Ches" Gundrum  
*Director of Advocacy*