

April 9, 2023

Testimony in Opposition to LD 1441

An Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

My name is Nathan Gould, and I submit this testimony in opposition to LD 1441, “An Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources.”

The issue with this bill is how vaguely it is written. It leads to questions as to whether this is an attempt to give the state more control over water use, or if this will eventually result in the implementation of a permit requirement for wells—an idea that has been brought up in the past and was defeated.

This brings many other previously defeated ideas and legislation to mind, such as giving the State ownership of groundwater, and creating a system in which landowners are charged for the water they use from their own land after said landowners bear the cost for drilling the wells and installing the pumps and pay for the energy to extract the water.

At worst, this may lead to unnecessary and exploitive burdens on citizens and businesses; at the least it creates more bureaucracy with which one must contend. History shows us that what seems to be innocuous consolidation may lead to the State seizing control over the People of Maine’s water resources. We do not need to retread old legislation that encroaches on citizens’ lives with the future legislation this bill may lead to. It depends on the discipline of Legislators—whether they be those of today or tomorrow—to resist the temptation to expand the State’s power, and we’ve recently seen an unfortunate dearth of restraint in that area.

I ask the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass, and I thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Nathan C Gould, Winterport