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# Maine Water Environment Association

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## Testimony of the Maine Water Environment Association

### Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

### In Support of LD 8, An Act to Support Collection and Proper Disposal of Unwanted Drugs

February 17, 2021

Good morning Senator Chair Brenner, Representative Chair Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Leonard Blanchette, and I am offering this testimony on behalf of the Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA) as a member of its Government Affairs Committee. I am also the general manager of the Brunswick Sewer District which serves the Towns of Brunswick and Topsham and serves as the septage receiving facility for more than 20 area communities.

MEWEA represents more than 700 members, including municipalities, sewer and sanitary districts, and combined utility districts, who are on the front line of keeping the waters of Maine clean through our diligent operation of sanitary and stormwater systems. A core mission of MEWEA is to promote professional environmental management practices to protect and improve the waters and related environments of the State of Maine. In furtherance of our mission, we offer this testimony in support of LD 8.

We are aware of the issues and concerns with the improper use of the private and public wastewater systems as a disposal method for unwanted drugs. And their effect on the aquatic life within Maine's waters. Any measure taken to remove or lessen their impacts will over time, and in concert with other efforts, make a huge difference.

This legislation is long overdue. The Maine Water Environment Association and its members fully support this initiative to have the manufacturers, distributors, and retailers become part of the solution to the proper disposal of unwanted drugs.

Contrary to public perception, our wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to remove - and cannot remove - toxic chemicals, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, herbicides, and the many man-made compounds that we now understand to be problematic to public health and the environment. LD 8 will help keep these pharmaceutical compounds out of the ecosystem.

We hope the Committee will join us in support of this legislation and vote a unanimous Ought to Pass.

Thank you for your support.

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