



RUMFORD-MEXICO SEWERAGE DISTRICT

May 3, 2021

Senator Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair
Representative Ralph Tucker, House Chair
Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

RE: Opposition to LD 676 an act to Reclassify the lower Androscoggin River to Class B.

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

As Superintendent of the Rumford-Mexico Sewerage District I am providing testimony as authorized by the Board of Trustees in opposition to L.D. 676, An Act to Reclassify parts of the Androscoggin River to Class B. We oppose this bill because it ignores Maine's existing triennial water reclassification regulatory process and seeks to impose additional costs and constraints on municipalities and their citizens and businesses without the DEP providing a positive recommendation to do so. This bill provides dubious benefits to some while imposing certain costs and economic constraints on others. The Legislature should not reclassify waters with the support of DEP's experience and technical expertise.

As recently as 2019, the DEP said that "there is no feasible approach to ensure attainment of Class B dissolved oxygen criteria in the lower Androscoggin River." Apparently, DEP still maintains this opinion based on their review of the science, but that opinion is being ignored by the proponents of LD 676. This Committee should not ignore that science and replace DEP's judgement with its own.

Some supporters of this bill will say that the bill is aspirational and that there will be no meaningful impacts. The DEP disagrees and points out that they are required to regulate all discharges to achieve and maintain the applicable water quality classification. Reclassifying the lower river by this bill would not only put the entire lower river into non-compliance, but also much of the upper river. As a result, once enacted, many upstream dischargers, whether public or private, will be required to take significant and expensive steps to ensure compliance with the Class B standard – but DEP has also said there is no level of reduction from any facility upstream or downstream that will achieve Class B standards at all times in the lower river. If nearly the entire river is in noncompliance, how can ANY new or expanded discharges be allowed?

We urge the Committee to uphold Maine's existing regulatory processes and vote this bill Ought Not to Pass.

Sincerely,

Roland M. Arsenault, Superintendent of RMSD.