

George Bald
Somersworth, NH

Re:LD 676
Committee Chair

I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to the proposed LD 676. The Maine DEP modeling indicates that the elimination of all discharges to the Androscoggin River will not actually improve water quality to Class B standards.

If this bill were enacted, it will not improve water quality. It will however, it will impose unnecessary costs on municipal and private dischargers, who are operating within their existing discharge limits. The bill will again, not improve water quality, but will restrict community and business growth.

I served as the Commissioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development for 13 years, retiring in 2012. I was responsible for Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Travel and Tourism, and Forests and Lands. I can speak first hand to the importance of the former Gorham Paper Mill to the region's economy. It is one of the few remaining mills on the River, but still crucial to the citizens of Coos County. The Mill was recently acquired by new owners at the end of 2020, and today operate the White Mountain Paper Company. They have an ambitious plan to rebuild the Mill's operations to improve efficiency and grow the business, all while meeting the requirements of their discharge licenses.

The proposed LD 676, represents a significant negative impact to the Gorham mill as well as other users along the River. LD 676 does not improve water quality.

In my time working for the State of NH, I had responsibility Economic Development, but also Resource protection. In my career, I always fought to improve our economy, and protect our environment. This proposed legislation is harmful to our State's economies and does not improve our environments.

Thank You

Respectfully,

George M. Bald
Former Commissioner, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development