

Maine



Rivers

**OUR MISSION IS TO
PROTECT, RESTORE AND
ENHANCE THE ECOLOGICAL
HEALTH OF MAINE'S RIVER
SYSTEMS**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LANDIS HUDSON

PROJECT MANAGER

MATT STREETER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHUCK VERRILL
PRESIDENT**

**JEFF REARDON
SECRETARY**

**CURTIS BOHLEN
TREASURER**

**NICK BENNETT
DAVID COURTEMANCH
GREG D'AUGUSTINE
SUSAN P. DAVIES
DAN GAYER
RICK LAWRENCE
SHARRI VENNO**

**P.O. Box 782
YARMOUTH, ME 04096**

PH: 207-847-9277

CONTACT@MAINRIVERS.ORG

WWW.MAINRIVERS.ORG

May 3, 2021

Senator Stacy Brenner
Representative Ralph tucker
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Support for LD 1488, Resolve, To Study and Recommend
Improvements to Maine's Dam Safety

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and Members of the
Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer our strong support for LD
1488, Resolve, To Study and Recommend Improvements to Maine's
Dam Safety.

As we grasp the realities of Maine's changing climate, we must find
ways to plan for and mitigate the impacts of weather patterns that are
already different from those of previous decades. We know that
we'll be facing both increased flooding as well as increasing periods
of drought. We can expect to see more extreme precipitation events
and sea level rise. Temperatures will be fluctuating more wildly.
There will be climate-change health and safety challenges to our
populations. Many of our communities will be facing increased
challenges to infrastructure like roads, roads culverts and bridges.
We must now consider Maine's inventory of aging dams, these will
also be impacted by the increasing severity of changing weather
patterns.

Many of Maine's dams, likely hundreds, have passed the point of
serving the purpose for which they were constructed. Yet they
remain in waterways, slowly deteriorating. While Maine's rivers and
communities along them have inherited a vast number of old dams,
Maine's Dam Safety program has been tasked with the responsibility
to manage the risks these dams pose with a small staff and limited
resources.

According to their website (<https://damsafety.org/maine>), as of 2018
there were 573 State-regulated dams, 32 with high hazard potential
and 72 with significant hazard potential. The remainder of the 469
are considered low hazard dams, yet the unplanned breach of a low
hazard during a weather emergency could compound and exacerbate
other problems. According to the website, as of 2018 Maine's dam
safety program consisted of 2.5 FTE with a budget of \$205,579.

I'm heartened to know that the staff of Maine's Emergency Management Agency is supportive of this effort to review their programs. We believe that this effort can help Maine find resources and support to improve our dam safety program, to avoid the risks of catastrophic dam failures that we have seen tragically occur in other states. We are hopeful that this will in bring in a new era of planning for public safety and responsibility. The Peer Review offered by the Association of State Dam Officials looks like an extremely valuable as part of this review process. This bill is an important first step we can take to provide greatly needed improvements to Maine's dam safety program.

We urge you to support LD 1488.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Landis Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Landis Hudson