

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

May 3, 2021

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

My name is David Huntress, and I am professional engineer #12132 in the State of Maine.

Early in my career I spent 5 years working for a highly respected firm in the field of dam safety assisting with dam inspections and associated investigatory efforts.

Years later, while working on a river restoration study focused primarily on fisheries restoration on a well-known river in Maine, a dam owner performed a partial drawdown of an impoundment to facilitate our efforts. Concurrent with our efforts, the dam owner also hired another local engineer to perform a formal dam safety inspection.

During the field work, I noted the concrete dam to have a poor seal to the underlying bedrock, with water actively leaking along the seam. Such is a symptom of dam instability. I was surprised to later read the dam inspection report prepared by another professional engineer assigned the dam a "good" condition; the dam would never have received a "good" condition assessment by the firm I used to work for.

After reviewing the dam safety standards, I was shocked to learn that a dam in such condition could receive such a positive assessment following the Maine dam safety regulatory framework. I therefore support ***LD1488- A Resolve to Study and Recommend Improvements to Maine's Dam Safety.***

Regards,
David Huntress, PE 12132
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