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

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## Opposition to LD 676, Relating to Reclassification of the Androscoggin River

Today's hearing marks another in a long series stretching back over many legislative sessions which considered similar or identical legislation proposed by the same or similar groups. The continuing success story of the Androscoggin River restoration is marked by a series of strong cooperative efforts that have worked over decades to achieve improvements that would have been unimaginable when the cleanup first began in the 1940s. These efforts have united around a shared belief in the importance of improving the health of the Androscoggin River among all citizens, their elected representatives, various commissions, boards, organizations, and representatives of affected industry.

The unity of purpose achieved through these efforts remains a model for others to consider as they seek to improve water quality, the environment, quality of life, and economic opportunity. The mere fact that this legislation is being proposed is damaging to the cooperative work that is being done everyday to continue to improve conditions on the River. At no point has the Town of Rumford been consulted or brought into any conversation regarding this legislation by its supporters. We believe in unity with our neighbors up and down stream.

We have invested millions of dollars in our storm water management, and anticipate additional investments in the near future to the Rumford-Mexico wastewater treatment plant. Given the existing operational challenges for the Rumford-Mexico Sewerage District, there is an obvious opportunity to discuss solutions which can focus on the next round of water quality improvements that will support the continued improvements to the health of the River.

These solutions are sustainable, sensible, and supported by a scientific consensus of goals that represent very significant progress and will also support the return of population to our communities. The Town would request that the Committee send a clear message today in support of cooperation and unity of purpose among all of the stakeholder communities. We believe that unanimous rejection of this legislation will send a clear and unmistakable signal in support of the hard work that is done everyday throughout the entire watershed by every community. We believe that taking a stand in favor of cooperation is the best possible way to continue to improve the health of the Androscoggin River at the fastest possible pace.