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LD 676, “An Act To Reclassify Part of the Androscoggin River to Class B”

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources May 3, 2021

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

I am Jeff Timberlake and I represent Senate District 22, which includes the Towns of Durham, Greene, Leeds, Lisbon, Litchfield, Sabattus, Turner, Wales, and Wayne. I am offering testimony today in opposition to LD 676, “*An Act To Reclassify Part of the Androscoggin River to Class B.*”

Although I signed on as a cosponsor of this proposal, I have since come to realize a number of ramifications and negative impacts passage of the bill would have on several of the municipalities along the Androscoggin River; so at this time I will not be supporting this bill as written.

Decisions regarding reclassification of the River should be left in the hands of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the background, knowledge and expertise they possess. Attempts have been made in the past to enact legislation to reclassify; and they, too, have been rejected. The DEP has conducted several studies over the years to determine if sections of the River meet criteria for reclassification and the standards have never been consistently high enough, so to speak, to make the change. A reclassification at this time would have negative consequences to municipalities and commercial facilities along the River.

Should LD 676 be enacted, the financial implications will put a tremendous strain on many communities who will then have to bear the costs of upgrades. I understand there have been discussions regarding the possibility of federal funds being allocated to assist with upgrades and other costs should there be issues with compliance; however, serious consideration needs to be taken because simply upgrading facilities may not be the only answer.

I urge you to follow the lead of the experts on this matter, the Department of Environmental Protection, and vote Ought Not To Pass.

Thank you for your time and consideration.