

April 24, 2021

Re: LD 676 – An Act to Reclassify Part of the Androscoggin River to Class B

To Whom it May Concern,

I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to the proposed LD 676. White Mountain Paper Company, formerly Gorham Paper, is located along the Lower Androscoggin River in Gorham NH, and is one of the operating Mills that will be negatively impacted by this proposed legislation, in addition to the other Gulf Island Pond dischargers.

Currently, the Lower Androscoggin River does not meet Class B standards, and it is unusual for a reclassification to be applied when the proposed standards are not currently being met. White Mountain Paper operates within compliance of its discharge permit, and passage of LD 676 would immediately put it into non-compliance.

White Mountain Paper was recently acquired out of bankruptcy, and its new owners have a respectable plan to stabilize its operations for the long-term, with the potential for growth and expansion. This plan will preserve and add to these much-needed, full-time jobs. This Mill has long been one of the region's largest employers, in addition to being one of New Hampshire's last few remaining paper mills. Its continued operation is extremely important to the Town of Gorham's economy, its residents, and the surrounding communities.

The proposed LD 676 represents a significant **negative** impact to the Mill and its employees, while not necessarily demonstrating that it will successfully result in improved water quality. In fact, it is my understanding that DEP modeling suggests that elimination of all discharges to the Androscoggin River will not improve water quality to Class B standards.

I respectfully ask the Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources to **not** support the passage of LD 676.

Respectfully,

Denise M. Vallee
Town Manager – Gorham, NH