

Audrey Hufnagel
Damariscotta
LD 1979

February 28, 2022

To: Environment and Natural Resources Committee

From: Audrey Hufnagel

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 1979 "An Act To Sustain Good-paying Jobs in the Forest Products Industry by Ensuring Consistency between Comprehensive River Resource Management Plans and State Water Quality Standards"

Senator Brennar, Representative Tucker, members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Audrey Hufnagel and I am a sophomore in high school from Damariscotta. I am writing to testify in opposition to LD 1979 "An Act To Sustain Good-paying Jobs in the Forest Products Industry by Ensuring Consistency between Comprehensive River Resource Management Plans and State Water Quality Standards".

Growing up along the Damariscotta River, I know how important rivers are for wildlife, recreation and fishing industries. The Damariscotta River is home to an abundance of wildlife including oyster and other mollusks, seals and a variety of fish and birds. I have been fortunate enough to be able to spend a lot of time on the river, enjoying watching wildlife and other forms of recreation. However, not all rivers in Maine are able to support such an abundance of wildlife and recreational opportunities due to harmful dams.

The damming of rivers can have serious impacts on wildlife. For instance, Atlantic salmon are almost extinct in the United States. In order to spawn, they must travel up the Kennebec River, but they are being blocked by dams along the lower Kennebec. Some of the most harmful dams are owned by Brookfield Renewable, and they have failed to take the proper measures to provide an alternative path for the salmon to continue upstream. Where dams have been removed, there have been numerous benefits for wildlife and the fishing industry.

LD 1979 would make it harder for the state to support these solutions that would benefit Maine rivers. The natural resources agencies of the state of Maine must be able to retain the authority to maintain the health of Maine rivers by participating in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) environmental impacts process and recommending dam removal if necessary. Decisions about the health of Maine rivers should not be left up to the dam owners who want to protect their profits.

I therefore urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 1979 so that other young people across the state can enjoy the beauty of Maine's rivers as I have.

Sincerely,
Audrey Hufnagel