

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

I am Richard Lawrence, for over 50 years a resident of Benton, Maine, a Republican, retired Town Selectman and Town Treasurer. I am concerned for the health of all Maine waters and, especially, the Kennebec River. As Benton's Alewife Warden I observe effective fish passage benefitting people and wildlife in the Sebasticook River.

Without intending any personal offense to you, honorable committee members, or the bill's sponsors, I find even the title of this proposed law misleading and offensive. I find the convoluted text of the bill typical of the worst of legislative jargon. I see intentional obfuscation and I smell a rat. The sponsors should plainly state that the bill will violate the Federal Clean Water Act which Maine has accepted and embraced for fifty years. The bill's passage will tie into knots any effort to restore the Kennebec and other rivers after 200 years of industrial use. It will mire efforts to restore salmon and other sea-run fish above Waterville in foolish legal wrangling until the fish are extinct and so, perhaps, are all of us.

I remember when the Kennebec swam with dioxins and other wastes, when we crossed three Fairfield bridges with eyes averted, holding our breaths to avert the stench. The only beneficiaries of this proposed legislation will be Brookfield Energy – and a hundred lawyers, gleefully profiting as they contrive sense from this 400-word long nonsense of plans, components and rules. Senator Muskie rolls in his grave.

I have confidence that Sappi engineers can solve water supply problems, just as Brookfield engineers could solve fish passage problems if only they had the will and good conscience to do so.

Thank you very much.