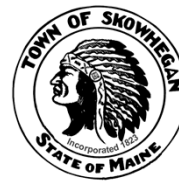


Todd Smith, Chairman  
Charles Robbins, Vice Chairman  
Harold Bigelow  
Steven Govoni  
Paul York

# Town of Skowhegan

## Board of Selectmen

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### **Testimony of Todd Smith, Charles Robbins, Harold Bigelow, Steven C. Govoni, P.E. and Paul York, Board of Selectmen for the Town of Skowhegan, in support of LD 1979**

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.

February 25, 2022

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Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of LD 1979. Submitted by the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Skowhegan.

We are writing to you today, in support of LD 1979. As a town that is bisected by the Kennebec River, a comprehensive river resource management plan is vitally important to the Town, our businesses and our residents.

The Kennebec River is an important resource to all of us in so many ways:

- The SAPPI Somerset Mill is Skowhegan's largest tax payer. They make up 40% of our tax base. The mill depends on the Kennebec River for its operations. SAPPI employs over 700 local people with many other people employed by businesses that support the Somerset Mill.
- Brookfield is our second highest taxpayer. Brookfield currently has \$31,202,000.00 worth of taxable property in Skowhegan, including the Weston Dam.
- Maine Water Company invested \$1.5 million to install a new water intake and pump station in the Kennebec River in 2020. Skowhegan residents and residents from surrounding towns, get their water from Maine Water Company.
- We have invested time and money in improving our riverfront for tourism and recreation. We are currently in the permitting process for the Skowhegan Riverpark project which is expected to have a huge economic impact on the whole region.
- Water recreation such as fishing, boating, kayaking.
- Many of our residents own property along the Kennebec River. River water levels may affect property owners' enjoyment of their property and their property value.
- Wildlife and migratory bird habitats along the riverbank.
- Fish and other aquatic species habitats within the river.

A comprehensive plan that takes all of these things into account, as well as the endangered status of Atlantic Salmon and other migratory fish species, is imperative for the continued, responsible use of this valuable resource.

We appreciate your time, and thank you for hearing our testimony in support of LD 1979.