

Testimony in favor of LD 1473

An Act to Protect Certain Unfiltered Drinking Water Sources

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senate Chair Brenner, House Chair Gramlich and Members of the Joint Standing Committee. My name is John Cleveland. I am a resident of Auburn, a former State Senator from Auburn and former Mayor of Auburn. I am also a public water customer.

I am writing to urge you to pass LD 1473 to protect public drinking water sources that have EPA waivers from filtration that are otherwise required by the federal Clean Water Act. There are only 40 waivers from filtration in the United States and 9 of them are located in Maine. Lake Auburn is one of them. Lake Auburn is the drinking water source for the cities of Auburn, Lewiston, and parts of Poland, which provides drinking water to more than 40,000 customers. Lake Auburn has provided clean and healthy drinking water to the area for more than 100 years.

Lake Auburn and other drinking water sources that do not require filtration are an essential and important asset to the health, and economic prosperity of the communities they serve. Like all open water sources, they are under the threat of being degraded by pollution that will lower the quality of the water and result in the loss of their EPA waiver and therefore require expensive filtration.

The greatest source of pollution is phosphorus run off in the watershed around the water source. Many scientific studies including of Lake Auburn have shown that development in the watershed is the greatest source of phosphorous run off. The best way to reduce phosphorus run off is to limit development in the watershed and allow forest growth and natural vegetation to protect the water source from phosphorus pollution.

LD 1473 therefore clarifies and amends LD 2003 to exempt unfiltered water sources in Maine from its provisions to permit additional development in their watersheds. This common-sense amendment protects essential unfiltered drinking water sources from expensive filtration requirements while still providing for additional and extensive housing development opportunities throughout the State. For Lake Auburn alone preliminary estimates to construct a filtration facility are \$40MM to \$50MM plus an annual operating cost of \$2MM to \$3MM. It is estimated that these costs could easily double the water bill for all customers.

I strongly urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1473 when the vote is taken to Protect Certain Unfiltered Drinking Water Sources.

John Cleveland
Auburn
LD 1473

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