

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 Kathy Shaw reading the testimony of Camille Parrish who is representing the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission.

The Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission urges you to pass this bill to protect the watersheds of public drinking water sources that have been granted EPA waivers from filtration otherwise required by the federal Clean Water Act. Lake Auburn is one of these drinking water sources and supplies public water to the municipalities of Auburn, Lewiston, and part of Poland. I am writing as the chair of the Commission which was created as a requirement of the approval of the filtration waiver for Lake Auburn. Our directive is to protect and control the Lake Auburn watershed and to prevent pollution from entering the lake which would degrade its water quality and threaten the filtration waiver. The Commission develops and implements a watershed management plan, in conjunction with outside experts, to achieve these goals. We take our charge seriously since it affects the availability and affordability of public water for our citizens.

LD 1473 is urgently needed to minimize the detrimental effects of additional development on Lake Auburn's water quality, and to allow for continued control of its watershed. Several recent studies solicited by the city of Auburn and the Commission have concluded that further development, specifically within the Auburn portion of the Lake Auburn watershed, would have negative impacts on Lake Auburn's water quality and is not recommended. In addition, conserving land and/or limiting development within upstream towns in the watershed is advised, namely in Turner, Minot, Buckfield, and Hebron. As you know, development increases sediment runoff, removal of trees/vegetation, and harmful amounts of phosphorus that flow into the local waters through septic systems. These factors lead to increased algal growth and decreased clarity and taste within the water supply, threatening the filtration waiver and the recreational/aesthetic qualities of the lake and adjacent watershed. As a result, LD 1473's passing is critical in our efforts to protect and control Lake Auburn's watershed.

Maintaining the filtration waiver is a high priority because it affords lower operation and maintenance costs. The Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission has taken steps over the years to maintain the waiver by purchasing land and conservation easements, overseeing forestry practices, educating citizens, and reviewing land use changes in the watershed. These efforts, among others, have been successful so far, but the filtration waiver and affordable water rates for homeowners, city services, and businesses are at risk from future development under LD 2003. Housing is a priority within the communities of the Lake Auburn watershed, however there is ample land outside of the watershed in which development of affordable housing can be constructed. Thus, passage of LD 1473 does not pose a risk to the intention of LD 2003 (to provide additional housing) within these watershed communities. Therefore, in order to maintain the filtration waiver

and affordable rates the Commission urges you to pass LD 1473.

Please vote OughtTo Pass on LD 1473 “An Act to Protect Certain Unfiltered Drinking Water Sources” Thank you for your time and service to our communities and to the State of Maine.