

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA)

Neither For Nor Against  
*LD 1111, An Act Concerning Contracts and Agreements for Large-scale Water Extraction*

March 30, 2022

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Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. My name is Kate Dufour, and I am submitting testimony “neither for nor against” LD 1111 on behalf of the 70 municipal leaders elected by their peers to serve on the Association’s Legislative Policy Committee and directed to establish positions on bills of municipal interest.

Municipal officials are torn on this issue.

While local leaders recognize that water is a natural resource that is held in common, they remain concerned that the provision in the bill requiring local legislative bodies (e.g., town meeting or council) in each municipality within the watershed to decide whether to award a contract will foster an environment that pits the interests of one community against others. As witnessed by the municipalities that have developed and implemented large-scale water extraction ordinances, the process is very complicated, and the resulting contracts must be carefully negotiated.

Although the provision in LD 1111 to limit the terms of water extraction contracts to three-years is viewed by some municipalities as requiring the companies who benefit from the sale of Maine water to give back to the community and region, municipal officials believe that the professionals hired to run water utility districts should continue to be entrusted with the authority to do what is best for the region’s watershed.

Thank you for considering the municipal perspective on this issue. If you have any questions about the Association’s position on this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me at [kdufour@memun.org](mailto:kdufour@memun.org) or 1-800-452-8786.