

In support of LD 883

My name is Robert Packie, and I am the president of the Downeast chapter of Trout Unlimited. As president of the chapter I would like to express our support for LD 883: An Act to Protect Endangered Species Whose Life Cycles Include Maine's Lands and Waters.

As I am speaking for the Downeast Chapter of Trout Unlimited- our mission is to conserve, protect, and restore Downeast Maine's coldwater fish populations and their habitat I am confining my testimony to the Atlantic Salmon. The Atlantic Salmon has been extirpated from all waters in the United States except for those in the State of Maine. The only recovery efforts to save the species in the United States are being done in Maine. These efforts are large and include improvements for fish passage, habitat restoration, and hatchery supplementation. Without these extensive restoration efforts the Atlantic Salmon would probably be extinct in the state.

The Atlantic Salmon is an iconic species in Downeast Maine. Downeast rivers, including the Penobscot, the Narraguagus, the Pleasant and the Machias, once had large populations of Atlantic Salmon. The historical importance of this species is without doubt, to the health of these rivers ecology, and to the Native Americans living along these rivers. It's importance in modern times is also without doubt, sportsmen from around the world came to Maine for salmon. In fact, there was a longstanding tradition that the first salmon caught on the Penobscot was sent to the President. Today there is a significant risk of the extinction of the Atlantic Salmon in Maine, the last state in the US with a remaining population. With their extinction an important part of Maine's history and cultural heritage will also go extinct.

I am expressing our support for this bill because it will strengthen protections for Atlantic salmon by bringing additional attention to the species at both the state and federal permitting decisions. It will also help to preserve critical habitat necessary for spawning salmon and habitat necessary for rearing juvenile salmon.

The original intent of the Maine Endangered Species Act was to include all species listed federally as endangered. A return to the original intent would allow Maine's fish and wildlife professionals to better protect our endangered species. We ask you to support LD 883. Thank you,

Robert Packie
President Downeast Trout Unlimited