

## **I Support of LD 883**

My name is Tammy Packie, and I am the Secretary of the Downeast chapter of Trout Unlimited. I would like to express my support for LD 883: An Act to Protect Endangered Species Whose Life Cycles Include Maine's Lands and Waters. I am speaking for myself, but the mission Downeast Trout Unlimited 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. Recovery efforts to save this species, listed as endangered on the federal lists, are only 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 will become extinct in the state of Maine.

The Atlantic Salmon is an iconic species in Downeast Maine. Our rivers, including the Penobscot, Narraguagus, Pleasant and the Machias, once had large populations of Atlantic Salmon. The historical importance of this species is well documented, its presence vital to the health of these rivers, their ecosystems, and to the Native Americans living along these rivers who relied on the fish as a vital food source. Salmon's importance in modern times is also without doubt, sportsmen from around the world came to Maine to fish 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 that the Atlantic Salmon will become extinct 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 disappear.

I am supporting LD883 because it will strengthen protections for Atlantic salmon by bringing additional attention to the species at both the state and federal permitting levels. It will also help to preserve critical habitat necessary for spawning and juvenile salmon. The original intent of the Maine Endangered Species Act was to include all species listed on the federal list as endangered in Maine as well. A return to the original intent would allow Maine's fish and wildlife professionals to better protect our endangered species. Please support LD 883. Thank you,

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