



Testimony in Support of LD 883:

An Act to Protect Endangered Species Whose Life Cycles Include Maine's Lands and Waters

Jeff Reardon, Maine Brook Trout Project Director
May 3, 2021

Senator Dill and Miramant, Representatives Landry and MacCreight, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Marine Resources:

My name is Jeff Reardon, and I am providing this written testimony on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU), a national conservation organization whose mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon and their watersheds. I am testifying on behalf of our 6 Maine Chapters and over 2000 Maine members, in support of **LD 883: An Act to Protect Endangered Species Whose Life Cycles Include Maine's Lands and Waters.**

We first want to acknowledge the complexity of this issue. Our understanding is that the bill sponsor and several supporters intend to submit some revised language. Our testimony is therefore directed to what we believe the intent of the bill would be: to include all federally listed endangered and threatened species as state-listed species under the authorities to administer lists of threatened and endangered species granted to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine Department of Marine Resources.

Our testimony relates to just one species—Atlantic salmon—that is federally listed as endangered but not listed by the state of Maine. Atlantic salmon are extirpated in all US states except Maine, and there is no doubt that they are at significant risk of extinction in Maine, and therefore throughout the US. They listed as a Category 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need under Maine's State Wildlife Action Plan and have been the focus of substantial state conservation efforts, spearheaded most recently by the Maine Department of Marine Resources, for more than 50 years.

We support this bill because we believe it would have direct and immediate benefits for Atlantic salmon. It would strengthen the state's hand in federal permitting decisions like the licensing process for hydropower dams, and it would bring additional scrutiny to protection of Atlantic salmon in state permitting decisions. I suspect you will hear the argument this morning that state listing

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would be redundant because these species are already federally listed.

Two years ago, I might have agreed with that sentiment. That was before I saw how much attention was paid to Roaring Brook Mayfly—a state-listed threatened species—in the permitting process for CMP’s transmission line to bring power from Quebec through Maine. On streams where Roaring Brook Mayfly or its habitat were present, the outstanding staff from the Maine DIFW’s non-game wildlife program and the Maine Natural Areas Program flagged their presence and required that the line be placed on taller towers to put it above the treetops—ensuring intact forested buffers to protect Roaring Brook Mayflies in the streams below. Federally listed Atlantic salmon did not receive similar attention, and no special conditions were placed on stream crossings where endangered salmon were present. More attention—and therefore more protection—would have given to salmon if their endangered status were recognized by the state.

We also believe that state listing for Atlantic salmon would encourage the Department of Maine Resources to designate “significant wildlife habitat” for “critical spawning and rearing habitat for Atlantic salmon” under the Natural Resources Protection Act.

The Maine Endangered Species Act was originally written to include all federally listed species. Returning to that standard will better protect rare fish and wildlife and will make the DIFW and DMR more equal partners with their federal counterparts in management of federally listed species. We encourage you to support LD 883.

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Trout Unlimited

I submitted testimony and signed up to testify on Friday. I got a confirmation email for my testimony, but do not see it on the list for today's hearing. I also did not get a link for today's 10 am hearing.

I am resubmitting it, and I would like to present testimony in person.

Thanks!