



Maine Chapter

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To: Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities & Technology

From: Zak Ringelstein, Sierra Club Maine

Date: March 27, 2019

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1198: An Act To Ensure Transparency and Participation in Maine Water Districts

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and the distinguished members of this committee. My name is Zak Ringelstein and I am a chair of Sierra Club Maine's legislative team. I am here in support of LD 1198, An Act To Ensure Transparency and Participation in Maine Water Districts.

The mission of the Sierra Club is: To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. I am here representing Sierra Club Maine's 18,000 members and supporters.

A recent UN report says that over 5 billion people will experience water shortage by 2050. That's a big problem affecting a lot of people. There will be a lot of suffering. But we, here in Maine, don't have water shortage issues - and we don't have to have them for the foreseeable future. We have an abundance of water in our lakes, streams, and aquifers.

My wife and I grew up in the lakes and rivers of this region, Leah in the Rangeley Lakes Region and me in the White Mountains. My 3 brothers and I always had a contest for who would jump in the water earliest in the season. I got a reputation for winning because I would always find a way to swim in April!

I have had a lot of pride in the delicious water that came out of our taps and the fresh water I would dive into every summer. It's one of the reasons Leah and I are raising our children here. And the last thing we need is for our water, the very thing that sets Maine apart and secures our future, to be risked at the hands of anyone other than Maine's good people.

This bill is fundamentally about making Maine more democratic. The people in charge of our water districts should not be beholden to special interests, but to the people who drink the water and swim in our lakes, ponds, and rivers.

Sierra Club Maine's Executive Committee voted unanimously to support LD 1198 because it is our job to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources - and this bill does just that.

Let's pass this bill for every child who grows up in Maine, my two sons included, so they never see a day when the water they drink and swim in is anything but abundant and clean.

