



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

PO Box 88
Belfast, ME 04915
Phone: (207) 761-5616
www.sierraclub.org/maine

To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
From: Matt Cannon, Sierra Club Maine
Date: February 28, 2022
Re: **Testimony in Support of to LD 1964: An Act To Update Certain Water Quality Standards and To Reclassify Certain Waters of the State**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee, my name is Matt Cannon, and I am speaking on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and protecting our natural resources. To that end, we urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on L.D. 1964.

DEP's periodic upgrades of water quality protection and classifications are among the most important tools to improve and protect Maine's clean water. 2022 is the 50th anniversary of Senator Edmund Muskie's Clean Water Act, which dramatically improved the quality of water and the quality of life in Maine and across the country. The system of water quality classification reviews and upgrades is based on Senator Muskie's ideas. There could be no more fitting tribute to Senator Muskie's legacy than passing DEP's upgrade package in this 50th anniversary year.

We support the bill overall, and an amendment to LD 1964 that would upgrade the Presumpscot River from Saccarappa Falls to tidewater from Class C to Class B.

DEP worries that, with these DO levels, upgrading this segment of the river fails to preserve adequate assimilative capacity for theoretical new dischargers, but this should not be a problem. Maine's Class B standard contemplates the water will be used for industrial processes, cooling water supply, and hydroelectric power generation. Historically, DEP has been very generous with how it calculates assimilative capacity. The two current dischargers have significant excess capacity allocated to them in their permits. This excess capacity might be reduced without affecting their operations. Moreover, technologies have evolved. New dischargers would come in needing to meet the Class B standard and could be built using modern technology. This is exactly how the Clean Water Act works.

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act and because it deserves it, please vote in support of L.D. 1964 with the amendment to upgrade the lower Presumpscot River “from Saccarappa Falls to tidewater” from Class C to Class B. You will be part of history and will protect this river and Casco Bay for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Matthew Cannon

Campaign and Policy Associate Director

Sierra Club Maine Chapter