TO: DEP-Hydropower@maine.gov

RE: Lower Kennebec Dams WQC Opportunity to Comment

Dear Maine DEP Representatives,

I’m writing to urge you to deny the Water Quality Certification (WQC) applications for the Hydroelectric Projects on the Kennebec River including the Lockwood, Hydro Kennebec, Shawmut, and Weston dams.

Maine’s Atlantic salmon are a tremendous resource that would be a real tragedy to lose. They are an indicator of the health of Maine’s rivers, a symbol of Maine’s wild and beautiful places and if they disappear they are gone forever. We have a chance to bring them back to healthy populations by giving them access to many tributaries they are now not able to access, including and especially the Sandy River.

The proposed fish passage for these four dams will not provide that access and indeed have failed on every other river where they’ve been used. These proposals fail to meet the legal water quality standard for Class B waters in Maine, which “must be of sufficient quality to support all aquatic species indigenous to those waters without detrimental changes in the resident biological community” (Title 38 M.R.S. §465).

These ineffective approaches will not restore populations of Atlantic salmon, nor will they allow the return of river herring, American shad, or American eel.

We have seen successful river restorations before—like the Edwards dam in Augusta and on the Penobscot River—where agencies, communities, tribes, and advocates came together for a shared solution.

I urge you to reject these ineffective proposals and instead support a plan that meets Maine’s water quality standards.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Richard Veilleux

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