



Executive Department
Laurent F. Gilbert, Sr.
Mayor



February 26, 2010

Senator Seth A. Goodall, (Chair)
Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

RE: Reclassification of the Androscoggin River

Dear Senator Goodall:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Lewiston. In the fall of 2008, the City supported a petition submitted by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) to reclassify the the Androscoggin River from the Durham boat launch or Worumbo Dam to its mouth at Merrymeeting Bay from Class C to Class B.

LD 330 Section 24 passed in 2009, required additional water quality data be collected on the lower Androscoggin to substantiate and support the classification upgrade. We understand from April-October of 2009 this additional data was collected. This Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) effort was done in cooperation with DEP partly under the auspices of their Volunteer River Monitoring Program (VRMP). We also understand a report will be presented to the Natural Resources Committee next week outlining the results of the effort. FOMB reports results of the intensive monitoring supports the previous request to upgrade this section of the Androscoggin River from Class C to Class B. More than one hundred samples were taken during the period in 2009 and the water quality results statistically support the recommendation to upgrade this section of the river.

As stated in the October 1, 2008 letter to Ernest Hilton (then Chair of the Board of Environmental Protection), The taxpayers of the City of Lewiston have invested millions of dollars into the effort to clean up the river. These investments have occurred at a time when every dollar paid by the public is increasingly difficult to part with. Those investments have come through the City's aggressive combined sewer overflow (CSO) program and the sewer user fees going directly to our jointly owned wastewater treatment plant. Not only does the City of Lewiston value the river and understand the potential benefit of this request, we have demonstrated our financial commitment to the same. It is gratifying to see the data results demonstrate our efforts are working!

Again, as stated in 2008, we further understand classification upgrades are appropriate where it is socially or ecologically desirable to attain higher standards and when the

technological and financial capacity exists to achieve those higher standards within a reasonable time. Given that the river already meets Class B standards and because there is also clear social and ecological benefit from a cleaner river, the requested classification appears appropriate. The experience other communities around the nation has shown time and again the tremendous potential for social, recreational, environmental and economic benefit from river restorations.

We understand that such an upgrade request, given the current conditions that have been measured, would not require any additional financial impact, now or in the future, on the citizens of our community. If that understanding is correct on behalf of the City, we encourage the Committee to move forward with the reclassification of the Androscoggin River below Lewiston/Auburn to Class B.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laurent F. Gilbert Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Laurent F. Gilbert Sr.
Mayor