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An Act To Ensure the Availability of Existing Drinking Water Sources of Supply

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §470-H, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 330, §12, is amended to read:

§ 470-H. Water use standards; rules

The board shall adopt rules that establish water use standards for maintaining in-stream flows and GPA lake or pond water levels that are protective of aquatic life and other uses and that establish criteria for designating watersheds most at risk from cumulative water use. Standards adopted under this section must be based on the natural variation of flows and water levels, allowing variances if use will still be protective of water quality within that classification. The board shall incorporate into its standards a mechanism to reconcile, to the extent feasible, the objective of protecting aquatic life and other uses as provided for in this section and the objective of allowing community public water systems to use their existing water supplies to provide water service. Rules adopted under this section are major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Board of Environmental Protection to incorporate into its water use standards a mechanism to reconcile the objectives of protecting aquatic life and of allowing existing water supplies to provide water service.