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Testimony of Rick McCarthy

In Support of LD 559, An Act To Standardize the Law Concerning Property Transfers and To Protect Water Quality

March 7, 2017

Senator Volk, Representative Fecteau, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development, my name is Rick McCarthy and I am offering this testimony on behalf of the Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA).

MEWEA represents more than 600 members, including towns and sewer districts, who are on the front line of keeping the waters of Maine clean, in part through our diligent operation of sewer systems, including underground utilities. The mission of MEWEA is to promote professional environmental management practices to protect and improve the waters and related environments of the State of Maine. Consistent with this mission, MEWEA is offering this testimony in support of LD 469.

A primary goal of MEWEA members is to protect the quality of surface and subsurface water in Maine. We do everything we can to properly manage wastewater to protect Maine's waters. Our members serve those Maine households connected with public sewer systems. We believe that is the best way to manage wastewater, but in a state as rural and spread out as Maine, it just is not realistic for all properties, whether residential or commercial.

A properly operating septic system can safely process wastewater without having negative impacts on the environment. The concern of course, is that a system may not be operating optimally and that may not be obvious to the property owner. MEWEA supports existing law that requires the inspection of a subsurface wastewater disposal system on property located within the shoreland area.

We want to thank Representative Hilliard for bringing forward this proposal to expand that requirement to inland shoreland zones as well. MEWEA supports this proposal to provide greater protection to the quality of Maine's water.

Please support LD 559.

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