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04333-0001

Paul R. LePage

GOVERNOR

August 23, 2016

Dan Ashe, Director
US Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW, Room 3358
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Director Ashe,

This letter is in response to a December 10, 2015 letter to the Kennebunk Light and Power District (KLPD), in which your agency recommends the District surrender their license for the Kesslen, Twine Mills, and Perkins dams on the Lower Mousam River.

The stated goal of the Service is to remove the dams for better fish passage, but it ignores the fact that there are several more non-hydro dams upstream that will severely limit the success of any restoration in this very small coastal river system. Without passage at these dams, restoration on the lower river is hardly worth the cost to local consumers.

KLPD is a consumer-owned electric utility with 6,500 local customers and is faced with the incredibly burdensome issue of navigating the bureaucracy of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Your recommendations will now make it impossible for them to exist. It is important that the federal government find a balance between protecting species and allowing small hydropower facilities to operate.

I understand that removing these dams will improve fish passage for diadromous species, but in the case of the Kesslen dam, such species have not had fish passage since the 1800s. Also, as I have stated, it ignores the upstream dams that limit any restoration. Does the Service plan to pay for the cost of passage or removal of these dams as well? Has the Service even interacted with community members to learn their concerns? I am sure the answer to these questions is no.

I urge you to not ignore the limiting upstream factors to restoration, to stop recommending the removal of important hydropower dams in Maine and instead find a way to balance the goal of restoration while maintaining clean renewable energy. As you know, it has been done in Maine—this system should be no different.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor



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