

John Bernard, Rumford, ME.

I am writing as a citizen of Rumford, Maine who is concerned about having recreational activities curtailed along the Androscoggin River, in particular the area near the Rumford Falls. This area is one of the most beautiful areas in the River Valley Area, if not the entire state of Maine.

Brookfield owns and operates Rumford Falls Hydro, generating power from the tremendous power of the river at the Falls. My concern is that the local citizens and visitors will lose access to hiking and fishing opportunities in the area due to restrictions put in place and proposed by Brookfield.

There is a walking trail along the river that offers a beautiful view of the Falls and surrounding area. Brookfield has closed this off to visitors. Below the Falls is what is known as Reflection Pool, a favorite area for fishing from Boivin Park, which is adjacent to the river. This park has been developed by the town and is near the local information booth. This park offers great tremendous views of the Falls and has a memorial to the late Ed Muskie, a Rumford native and sponsor of the 1972 Clean Water Act. I fear that Brookfield will close access to this Park as well.

As an avid fly fisherman and lifetime area resident, I am troubled by Brookfield's history of limiting fishing access around prime areas as witnessed with their reconstruction of Upper Dam at the outlet of Mooselookmeguntic Lake. Prime fishing areas below Upper Dam have now been fenced off, preventing access to areas that Brookfield promised to protect. The Androscoggin River, once disgustingly polluted, is not the river of my youth. The town of Rumford, trying to redefine itself to take advantage of the tremendous recreation opportunities available in this area, would benefit greatly by being guaranteed access to these areas around its majestic Falls.

I would welcome Brookfield a commitment to work with the Town of Rumford and the Maine Fish and Wildlife Department to ensure that recreational access will be given to citizens before any relicense is granted.

I thank you for taking the time to read this.

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