

MAINE DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2020 APR 27 PM 1:49

Mark P. DesMeules
312 Head Tide Road
P.O. Box 85
Alna, ME 04535

April 24, 2020

RE: Spinney appeal/proposed project Dept. Order L-28397-4E-A-N

Mark C. Draper, Chair
Board of Environmental Protection
17 State House Station
28 Tyson Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333-0017

Dear Chairman:

You are familiar with me from my earlier letter requesting that consideration be given to the wild river corridor and the precedent that would be set were this proposal to go ahead in its current configuration.

As a land owner on the Sheepscot River and not far from the proposed project, it has taken me a while to actually get up to speed regarding the width and breath of this project and to understand both the implications to the river and existing protected lands and the players involved. I will explain some of my concerns regarding this project in the following paragraphs.

As a land owner on the Sheepscot River, upstream of the proposed project, I ask that this project be denied in its current configuration. As those who formerly appealed this project pointed out, a tremendous amount of time, money and effort has preceded this proposal with the goal of contributing to the permanent conservation values all of us benefit from within the corridor that stretches from the Wiscasset railroad bridge to the Head Tide dam. Conservation easements are in place, permanently protected lands have been purchased and made available for low impact recreational use, the Forever Wild Corridor has been identified as a land conservation corridor for over 25 years, a large number of land owners have donated land and easements or intend to within this corridor, and of course the Town of Alna recently improved the fish passage at the Head Tide Dam which significantly contributes to the overall ecology of the river, supported by each and every effort mentioned previously. No one individual has the right to compromise what has taken so many to assemble. There is a common good that outweighs the individual benefit. A compromise needs to be struck. This is what I am asking you to consider.

The Spinney proposed project and its impacts will significantly threaten all of this work and all of the values that are the intended target of these efforts to date. All reviewers of this proposal both at the State level and the Town level must take into consideration this existing conservation context and the impact the proposed project will have both on existing values as well as the impact it will have as a precedent leading the way to further degradation of these values. I remind you as well that this river, the Sheepscot River, supports regionally and nationally significant fish runs that have been and continue to be the focus of millions of dollars of federal, state and private investment to not only maintain what exists but to restore these runs to their historic levels. This proposal would directly impact these efforts today and into the future.

I ask that you take a step back on this project and reconsider its impacts. I also ask you to look into what appears to be a conflict of interest where, in Alna, the applicant has a family member on the Alna Select board and the applicant himself is Chair of the Alna Planning Board. I sincerely hope that in all matters relating to this process that both have completely recused themselves from any and all matters pertaining to this project. This should be clear in all past discussions and considerations of this project and all future ones.

In conclusion, I ask that the Alna Planning Board and the DEP to step back and reconsider this project in its current configuration. It will permanently damage the very significant work and investments that have long preceded this application and by this virtue alone, this project should be rejected/scaled back to eliminate these conflicts. Taking this action would uphold the true meaning of "planning" as it relates to doing the best for Maine and the best for Alna.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark P. DesMeules', written in a cursive style.

Mark P. DesMeules
Alna resident