

**12/19/24 JOINT STATEMENT
5 TOWN DAM COMMITTEE
(SILVER, ALAMOOSOOK, TODDY)**

Representatives from the 5 Town Dam Committee met at the Bucksport Town Office on Wednesday, December 18th to discuss new developments regarding Bucksport Mill LLC's petition to abandon the Toddy, Alamoosook, and Silver Lake dams.

Outreach Enhancements

The group discussed enhanced efforts to increase public awareness of the status of the dams and to encourage citizens to contribute to funding the costs incurred by the 5 Towns for legal representation in our discussions with the current dam owner. In addition to the current effort to distribute our bi-weekly statement via print media, email, website posts, and Facebook page postings the group is looking for additional avenues to engage with citizens.

Ownership Models

It is recognized that the Silver Lake dam is very unique in that it is a public water supply and also provides cooling water for an electricity generating plant. Its future most likely will follow a different path from that of the Alamoosook and Toddy dams.

The four towns abutting Alamoosook Lake and Toddy Pond believe the State of Maine should conclude that there is sufficient justification (regional recreational value; important fish, bird, and other wildlife habitat) for the state to assume ownership of the dams. However, the towns also believe that developing an alternative ownership contingency plan is prudent given the uncertainties and time frames involved. Thus the four towns associated with Alamoosook and Toddy have been working with our local legislators to have special bipartisan legislation introduced in the state legislature that would create waterfront protection districts that would have the authority to 1) own and operate the dam creating the relevant body of water

(Alamoosook and Toddy) 2) assess special taxes/fees on property owners fronting the respective water body and those with deeded access, and 3) potentially incorporate a provision for mandatory contributions by abutting municipalities to defray a portion of the dam ownership costs.

There are numerous local water districts formed by similar legislation that provide potable water within the defined district area, charging water rates to users in order to generate funds for operating and capital costs.

Although these districts are not the preferred outcome, the four towns believe that, if successfully formed, they would provide a long-term solution to maintaining the dams and the lake/pond water levels, since the taxing authority would provide a relatively certain, stable source of funds for operations. Private ownership of the dams exposes both the property owners and the municipalities to a variety of risks, such as inadequate funding, a new petition to abandon the dam, bankruptcy, and lack of representation/control by the property owners.

While creating this entity can be done via legislation at the state level, implementation of this effort would be completely subject to municipal voter approval. The group will seek public input on the details of the design and will be gauging the public support for such an entity.

Legislative Support

Steve Bishop - HD 17 Representative, and David Haggan Senate District 10 along with HD- 36 Representative Kim Haggan attended the meeting. All three pledged support for the bipartisan legislation and offered their assistance in working with DEP to gain support for the Towns.