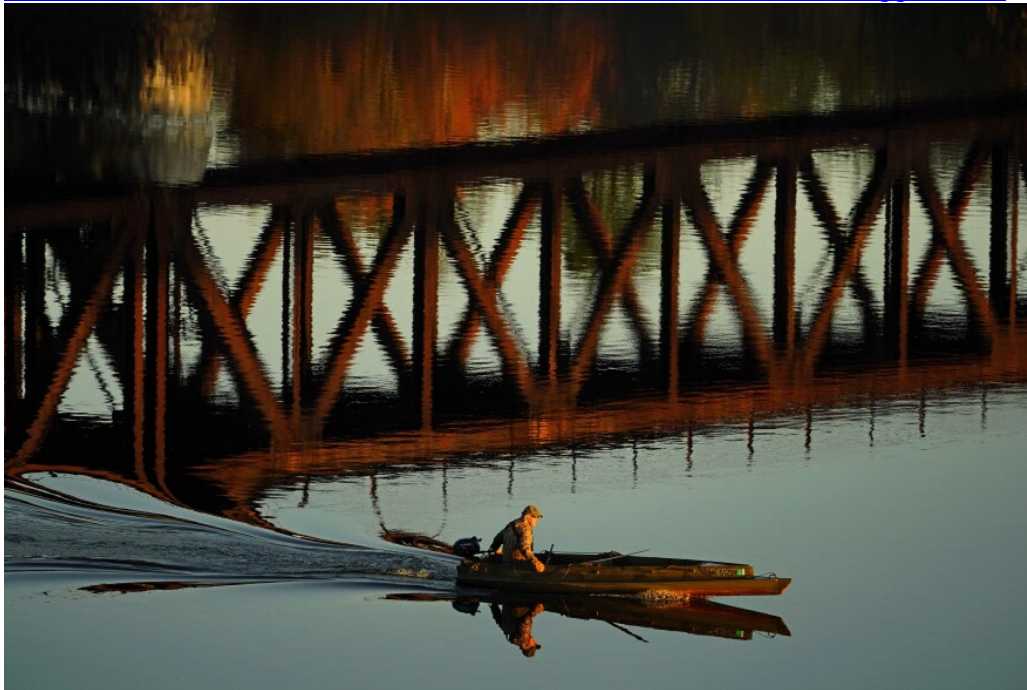


Maine environmental board recommends stricter standards for lower section of Androscoggin River

Maine Public | By [Robbie Feinberg](#)

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Robert F. Bukaty

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AP

A duck hunter motors by the reflection of a train trestle on the Androscoggin River, Friday, Oct. 29, 2021, in Brunswick, Maine.

The Maine Board of Environmental Protection is recommending that a portion of the Androscoggin River, from Lisbon Falls to Merrymeeting Bay, be upgraded to Class B status.

It's a stricter water quality standard, and it comes after decades of cleanup and improvements.

The recommendation to improve the Androscoggin's status from Class C to Class B would extend only to a small part of the river, below the Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls.

Several local groups pushed for an even larger section of the river — beginning near Turner — to be upgraded. But they faced opposition from some paper companies and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Nevertheless, the local group Friends of Merrymeeting Bay says the recommendation for the smaller section is significant, as the stricter standard would help prevent the river's condition from backsliding.

Any change would need to be approved by the Legislature. State Sen. Ned Claxton of Auburn proposed a bill in the last legislative session to reclassify the larger section of the river. He views the latest recommendation as a possible compromise that could set a precedent for any future upgrades.

"It doesn't meet what the original intent of the bill was. But it certainly accomplishes a significant step forward, in that this is about the fourth time this has been attempted," he says.

Claxton's bill was carried over to the next legislative session, and he expects it to be reconsidered next year.