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Group to Sue Over Fish Passage on Kennebec River

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The Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and two other individuals say fish, including endangered Atlantic salmon, are getting chopped up by turbine blades on the river's dams.

Fish passage on the Kennebec River is the subject of a lawsuit expected to be filed by a local environmental group and two Maine residents. Friends of Merrymeeting Bay claim that turbine blades on hydro-electric dams indiscriminately kill endangered Atlantic salmon and protected American shad.

The group and the two individuals have filed a notice of intent to sue under the U.S. Clean Water Act. Among those filing the suit is Douglas Watts of Augusta, founder of Friends of the Kennebec Salmon.

"These four dams, their owners have not done anything, and so the salmon are getting, basically, chopped up as they try to go back to the ocean," Watts says.

The federal lawsuit asks the owners of the four lowermost dams on the Kennebec River to immediately install protective screening over their turbine intakes.

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