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Salmon suits allowed to proceed

BY THE MAINEBIZ NEWS STAFF

Today

A federal judge has ruled that two lawsuits from environmental groups targeting dam owners on the Androscoggin River should be allowed to proceed.

On Friday, U.S. Magistrate Judge John Rich III recommended that motions to dismiss the suits, which claim the dams harm the endangered Atlantic salmon, be denied, according to the [Sun Journal](#). Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and Environment Maine [filed the suits](#) in February against Miller Hydro and Topsham Hydro, arguing the turbines on the companies' dams in Lisbon Falls and Topsham injure and kill salmon, violating the Endangered Species Act. The companies have 14 days to file objections to Rich's recommendation that the suits move forward. Officials and attorneys for the companies did not comment on the judge's decision. In his recommendation, Rich rejected the hydro companies' argument that the environmental groups must seek a decision from the National Marine Fisheries Service on whether the dams are harming salmon, because that study is still in preliminary stages.

Separate suits against other dam owners on the Androscoggin and Kennebec rivers are still awaiting a recommendation. Florida Power & Light/NextEra Energy Resources Inc. has filed a motion to dismiss the suit against it, while Brookfield Renewable Power Inc. has not yet filed any motions, according to the [Kennebec Journal](#).

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