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Testimony on LD72. March 25, 2013

My name is Macauley Lord and I live in Brunswick. I started teaching fly-fishing professionally for an international sporting goods company out of Freeport 27 years ago. I'm a Registered Maine Fishing Guide, the author of two fly casting books, and I've trained fishing guides and fly-casting instructors on four continents.

One of the best places in the world to fish is in Maine smallmouth rivers, primarily in rivers that have alewives, like the Kennebec and the Sebasticook.

Teaching fly fishing schools in the 1980's and 90's out of Grand Lake Stream, I used to fish the St. Croix a little bit every summer and I've fished it occasionally since then. It's a very nice fishery but it just doesn't stand up to rivers with alewives. It's kind of funny to hear this idea of alewives competing with smallmouths for food, because to a smallmouth, alewives ARE food. I've caught big smallies with alewife tails sticking out of their mouths.

The best day of smallmouth bass fishing I ever had was in the fall of 1996. A friend and I fished the Sebasticook River at its confluence with a tributary brook [at a secure, undisclosed location] where there were juvenile alewives coming down the brook and trying to swim out into the river. But they didn't get very far. Between us, we landed about 30 bass that ranged from 18 to 21 inches [I'm assuming I'm under oath here], all on flies. On another fall trip to the Sebasticook, the bottom of the river below the dam in Benton was covered with silvery, juvenile alewives that had been crunched as they tried to migrate down through the turbines. Despite the tremendous amount of bait in the river, smallmouth were still chasing the juve's on the surface and still whacking my fly.

The greatest flyrodder in North America is Lefty Kreh and he's been to Maine many times to smallmouth fish. What is his go-to river now in Maine? The Sebasticook. I know the fellow who guides him, and Lefty's fishing buddy up here is a friend of mine. The guide is also a professional fisheries biologist and told me flatly that the Sebasticook is the best bass river in Maine. Did I mention that it has alewives?

I went back up to the St. Croix again a couple of summers ago and saw that it is still a good fishery. But with the amazing number of big smallies farther south, why would I go back to the edge of Canada when I can catch so many bass that are turbocharged on alewives right around here? As soon as we get a strong run of alewives in the St Croix, I'll go back up there to check it out. But for now, lacking alewives, the St. Croix is not the bass fishery it could be, so I'll stay south. Sadly, blocking a strong run of alewives from the St. Croix will only result in a bass fishery that continues to be left behind.

Respectfully submitted,

N. Macauley Lord