

Janet T. Mills
Governor



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February 11, 2022

Mr. Kevin A. Gagne, PE
Deputy Director of Utilities
Lewiston Public Works Department
103 Adams Ave.
Lewiston, ME 04240

RE: Proposed Ordinance Revision – Impact on Filtration Waiver

Dear Mr. Gagne:

The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program (DWP) is in receipt of your January 24, 2022 letter regarding the adoption of revised septic system design standards recommended in a recent report commissioned by the City of Auburn (“A Regulatory, Environmental, and Economic Analysis of Water Supply Protection in Auburn, Maine for the City of Auburn, ME,” by FB Environmental Associates, Horsley Witten Group and the University of Maine, October, 2021 (Report)). You specifically inquired whether these new standards would conflict with the waiver from filtration requirements that has been granted to the City of Lewiston, Lewiston Water Department (LWD) for Lake Auburn pursuant to the Surface Water Treatment Rule in the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The DWP has reviewed the Report and appreciates the challenge the authors faced in developing a single document that addresses these three aspects of Lake Auburn management.

Your question pertains to the Report’s recommendation to revise the septic system requirements in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District to include “provisions that allow for mounded leach fields and other State-approved alternative designs where there is not a native, in-situ, 36-inch vertical separation between the bottom of the organic horizon and the bedrock, water table, or other restrictive layer.” The Report states that the existing septic system requirements have become a de facto limitation on new development in much of the watershed. Their buildout analysis with the recommended septic system requirement revisions results in more than 100 potential additional homes being built in the watershed.

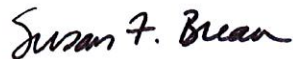
There are only approximately 50 drinking water sources nationwide that have been granted a filtration waiver. These waivers are predicated on a variety of factors, the most important of which is exceedingly clean source water. A Public Water System with a filtration waiver must “control all human activities which may have an adverse impact on the microbial water quality of the source water” (40 CFR 141.71(b)(2)(iii)).

The DWP will always advocate for the most protective watershed practices attainable, particularly when a filtration waiver is in place. In this case, modifying the current septic

system requirements in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District could result in biological contamination to the lake if new septic systems are not installed and maintained properly. LWD should be aware that these circumstances could threaten LWD's filtration waiver for Lake Auburn if future sampling determines that standards have been exceeded.

Feel free to contact me regarding this letter, the LWD filtration waiver for Lake Auburn, or any other matter. Thank you for your good work providing safe drinking water.

Sincerely,



Susan F. Breau, LG, Hydrogeologist
Water Resources Team Leader
Maine CDC Drinking Water Program
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ec DWP file
cc Denise Douin