

MAINE MOTOR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

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"The spokesman for the Maine Trucking Industry"

August 24, 2021

The Honorable Janet T. Mills
Office of the Governor
#1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0001

Dear Governor Mills,

We have been contacted by a number of our trucking members concerned about the future of the Sappi operation in Somerset due to the potential removal of the Shawmut Dam on the Kennebec River. Understanding that there are non-economic issues at play with this situation, we would like to add our voice for your consideration while there is still time to do the right thing.

As you know, the trucking industry is a large and integral part of our state's economy. In Maine, our industry supports more than 32,000 blue-collar jobs that benefit from manufacturing operations like the Sappi mill in Skowhegan. Truckers haul raw materials and supplies into mills like Sappi and haul the finished product to market, serving as the critical link in the supply chain. But now these high-paying direct and indirect jobs – and the taxes their employers pay, the equipment that is purchased at Maine dealerships, the parts that are bought locally, etc. – all of this is jeopardized by what appears to be a narrow view of public benefit. Please do not ignore the significance of the economic impact from the removal of the Shawmut Dam.

We ask that you also consider the state's 10-year strategic economic development plan as the Shawmut Dam issue unfolds. That plan outlines the need to maintain a stable business environment through a commitment to predictability, transparency, and timeliness. Yanking the rug out from under a major employer like Sappi, with significant direct and indirect jobs tied to it, is not only contrary to the plan, but also deters any business who might be considering capital improvements or investments in the future. After all, who would invest money in a Maine operation when political realities can render those investments worthless so easily?

On behalf of our 1,600 member companies, whose employees make up a large portion of the 32,000 people who make their living in the trucking industry in Maine, we ask for your leadership once again to ensure Maine jobs and our economy don't suffer as a result of this issue.

Sincerely,



Brian Parke
President and CEO
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CC: Kathy Howatt, Maine DEP (via email Kathy.Howatt@maine.gov)