



LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Fall is here and winter is quickly approaching. Before we all become fully swept up in the holidays, The Board of Directors of the Alamoosook Lake Association want to take a moment to update you on all we have been doing to stay informed and involved as AIM moves to separate itself from the Alamoosook Lake dam, Toddy Pond dam and Silver Lake dam.

As you may be aware, AIM filed its Petition to be released from its ownership of these dams with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Maine DEP initially rejected AIM's Petition requiring them to refile it. AIM did so and the DEP has recently accepted their Petition much to the surprise and disappointment of those following this process. AIM failed to include many of the necessary documentation and information the towns of Orland and Bucksport deemed necessary. The DEP's action in accepting AIM's Petition has caused many of us to conclude the DEP will not be our ally in this process and we must be prepared to act on our own behalf.

Now that the DEP has accepted AIM's Petition, the process for AIM to release its ownership of the dams is in full motion. AIM is now required to do the following:

- (1) Consult with Individuals and groups of persons, **such as lake associations**, who own property, abutting the dam site, the water impounded by the dam or the waterway immediately downstream from the dam;
- (2) Consult with the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the Director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency; and
- (3) Consult with the municipal officers of any municipality and the county commissioners of any unorganized area in which the dam or impoundment is located

As some of you may know, AIM came and “spoke” to the town of Orland on November 14th. Your President Lisa DeWeese was present and asked several questions of AIM on behalf of the membership. Lisa did a terrific job. If you were not able to attend or view this meeting you may watch the recording of the meeting by clicking this link: <https://youtu.be/8t7Ee7dibGg>. AIM’s “non-answers” are posted on bucksportmillanswers. Many individuals asked questions however, all left the meeting with no additional information.

Although AIM representatives were present at the meeting, AIM refused to answer any questions, saying it will post answers on its website. It is unclear if this meeting meets the first condition AIM must meet or not.

It is very concerning to the ALA Board that the DEP has accepted AIM’s Petition to release itself from ownership of the dam. We have consulted with an attorney to determine if provisions contained in many of the deeds held by ALA property owners on Alamoosook can hinder or stop AIM’s actions. Should AIM find a new owner of the dams, the obligations contained in the deeds arguably will flow to the new owner. However, if AIM does not find a new owner and proceeds to move toward abandonment, it is very unclear whether these provisions will have any legal basis to prevent abandonment.

What will happen to our dams is very unclear. The worst case scenario would be that AIM is permitted to abandon the dams and our lake will no longer exist in its current state. Another equally poor outcome would be if an environmental group decided to purchase the dam with the intent of dismantling it for environmental reasons. Again our lake would no longer exist in its current state. We firmly believe that the State is not interested in owning the dams.

It is for these reasons that the Board of the ALA is exploring multiple different options:

- (1) We are working very collaboratively with the Town of Orland to try and protect our interest in the dam. It is unclear what Orland’s appetite is for taking ownership of the dams or whether they have the ability to do so;
- (2) We are exploring whether other municipalities would be willing to finance ownership of the dam;
- (3) We are exploring if could we could seek out an owner who would be aligned with our (the ALA’s) interest in keeping the dam and thus keeping our lake in its current state; and
- (4) We are exploring whether the ALA should position itself to become the owner of the dam **if no other buyer comes forward**

Once the holidays have passed we will be holding a town hall meeting with the membership to provide additional information (if it exists) and to answer any questions you may have. We cannot stress the importance of becoming engaged in this issue. The future of Alamoosook lakes depends on it!

