

MPBN

Maine Groups Sue to Shut Down Dam Turbines

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Environment Maine and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay say turbines on the dams are killing large numbers of young endangered Atlantic salmon trying to make their way back out to sea.

Two Maine groups are asking a federal judge to order the shutdown of turbines at four of the state's hydroelectric dams to save out-migrating populations of young endangered Atlantic salmon.

Environment Maine and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay say turbines on Kennebec River dams kill a third to a half of the young smolts trying to make their way back out to sea, according to studies conducted one of the dams' owners, Florida-based NextEra Energy Resources LLC.

Three of the dams the groups are targeting are located on the Kennebec River. They include the Weston, Shawmut and Lockwood dams. A fourth dam, the Brunswick dam, is located on the Androscoggin River.

"It's been nearly four years since Atlantic salmon were listed as endangered, and NextEra still has failed to take action to save these iconic fish," says Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor, in a statement. "Time is running out to save the Atlantic salmon, and we simply can't delay another season."

The two groups filed a motion for a preliminary injunction last week in U.S. District Court in Portland, citing the Endangered Species Act. The defendants include NextEra Energy Resources, FPL Energy Maine Hydro, LLC, and affiliated companies.