



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2024

Legislative Document

No. 2141

H.P. 1365

House of Representatives, January 3, 2024

**An Act to Enhance Protections for and Better Address Invasive
Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State**

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative HASENFUS of Readfield.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and
Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, BRIDGEO of Augusta, CRAVEN of Lewiston,
DILL of Old Town, DOUDERA of Camden, MORIARTY of Cumberland, Senators: CURRY
of Waldo, NANGLE of Cumberland.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 434, Pt. A, §7, is
3 amended to read:

4 **1. Program.** The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and
5 Wildlife jointly shall implement a program to inspect watercraft, watercraft trailers and
6 outboard motors at or near the border of the State and at boat launching sites for the
7 presence of invasive aquatic plants; to monitor inland waters of the State known to have
8 invasive aquatic plants; and to provide educational materials to the public and to watercraft
9 owners regarding invasive aquatic plants and surface use restrictions.

10 **Sec. 2. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 434, Pt. A, §7, is
11 amended by amending the first blocked paragraph to read:

12 The program in 2002 and subsequent years must be at a level of effort determined by the
13 commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in consultation with
14 the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species, as established
15 in section 1871. The program must include a review of watercraft inspection protocols and
16 surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State with invasive aquatic plants.

17 **Sec. 3. Commissioners to study watercraft inspection protocols and surface**
18 **use restrictions on inland waters of the State with invasive aquatic plants;**
19 **review of protocols and restrictions.** The Commissioner of Environmental Protection
20 and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall review watercraft inspection
21 protocols and surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State known to have invasive
22 aquatic plants and make recommendations related to how these protocols and restrictions
23 could be strengthened. The commissioners shall also evaluate how information about
24 restrictions is communicated to members of the public. By January 1, 2025, the
25 commissioners shall submit a report, including any suggested legislation, to the joint
26 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife
27 matters on their findings and recommendations with respect to watercraft inspection
28 protocols and surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State with invasive aquatic
29 plants and how information on restrictions is communicated to members of the public. The
30 committee may report out legislation based on the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

31 **Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
32 allocations are made.

33 **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF**

34 **Water Quality 0248**

35 Initiative: Provides one-time funding to the Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species
36 Fund to address aquatic plant infestations as authorized by the Maine Revised Statutes,
37 Title 38, section 1863.

38 GENERAL FUND	2023-24	2024-25
39 All Other	\$2,000,000	\$0
40		
41 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$2,000,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>

SUMMARY

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This bill appropriates \$2,000,000 to the Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species Fund to address the most serious aquatic plant infestations in inland waters of the State. It requires the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to review and recommend more stringent watercraft inspection protocols on infested inland waters of the State and to review surface use restrictions and notification of those restrictions to members of the public.