Maine

Rivers

May 5, 2023

RE: LD 958 An Act to Expand Protections to Maine's Loons from Lead Poisoning by Prohibiting the Sale and Use of Certain Painted Lead Jigs.

To Member of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

Thank you for this opportunity to share our support for LD 958. We urge you to vote to close the loophole which allows lead jigs to poison loons in Maine waters. Ten years ago we testified in favor of LD 730. We have been pleased to see the progress its passage made. We urge you to continue by phasing out the sale and use of painted lead jigs, those that weigh an ounce or less. or measure 2.5" or less. We understand that the protective coating on fishing has been found not to be as protective of loons as hoped, and in fact the paint is removed during the birds' digestive processes which leads to lead poisoning. Other fish-eating birds also consume prey with lead tackle in their bodies, which brings to contamination problem to extend beyond loon populations.

Loons are iconic to our waterway and for many people their presence defines a deeply meaningful connection with wildlife. Yet much as we revere them, human impacts are profoundly negative—from boat strikes and habitat loss to nest washouts caused by wake boats. Given these on-going challenges and the likely impacts of climate change, we urge you to take action to reduce the potential for lead poisoning of loons by supporting LD 958.

Thank you,

Landis Hudson
Maine Rivers Executive Director
landis@mainerivers.org

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