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An Act To Improve the Water Quality of Inland Waters

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, Maine's lakes generate in excess of \$3,400,000,000 in revenue each year, provide employment for 52,000 people and underpin our increasingly important tourism economy; and

Whereas, water quality in Maine's lakes, considered as having some of the highest water quality in the nation, has declined by as much as 20% since 1995 due to the introduction of phosphorus and other pollutants carried by eroded soils and storm water runoff from camp roads, driveways and lawns and from failing septic systems; and

Whereas, in many communities waterfront properties generate 60% to 70% of the tax base and any decline in water quality will cause property values to drop by 15% to 20% and will shift the tax burden to nonwaterfront homeowners; and

Whereas, scientific studies demonstrate that programs such as the LakeSmart program, which is a voluntary education and reward program for lakefront property owners who maintain their property in ways that protect lake water quality and property values, that keep phosphorus and other pollutants out of lakes are among the most cost-effective ways to protect lakes; and

Whereas, the LakeSmart program, as operated by the Maine Lakes Society, has tripled the number of lakes and waterfront properties that participate in the program; and

Whereas, the Maine Lakes Society operates the LakeSmart program for approximately 2/3 of the cost of the program as run by the Department of Environmental Protection; and

Whereas, the success of the LakeSmart program depends upon its widespread use throughout the State; and

Whereas, it is in the best interest of the State to support the Maine Lakes Society and its implementation of the LakeSmart program as the State seeks to ensure the health of its long-term economy, the employment of its residents and the strength of its communities; and

Whereas, scientific analysis of the data gathered through the efforts of volunteers throughout the State who participate in the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program is critical to the understanding of the current water quality of our lakes; and

Whereas, this legislation needs to take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period in order to provide funding for the LakeSmart program and to analyze data from the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program in fiscal year 2013-14; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF

Land and Water Quality 0248

Initiative: Provides annual appropriations of \$80,000 for the purpose of supporting the Maine Lakes Society in its implementation of the LakeSmart program and \$20,000 for the purpose of analyzing the data gathered by the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program.

GENERAL FUND	2013-14	2014-15
All Other	\$100,000	\$100,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$100,000	\$100,000

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This bill appropriates \$100,000 annually to the Department of Environmental Protection to provide \$80,000 to the Maine Lakes Society in its implementation of the LakeSmart program and \$20,000 for the purpose of analyzing the data gathered by the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program.