

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Susan Traylor and although I am a Maryland resident, I have spent part of every summer of my life at Webber Pond in Vassalboro, all summer with my grandparents when I was a child and again with my husband as a retiree. Our camp has been in my family since 1941 when my grandparents lived in Waterville.

I am asking for your support for LD 164: An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund.

I became Director of the Webber Pond Association Board when I retired, so that I could help to preserve and improve this pond, which is so important to me and other residents and users. I maintain and analyze data on Webber's water quality and the factors that impact it.

Webber Pond has a history of problem algae blooms, but blooms had become much less severe until last year. **Webber Pond had a long-lasting and very detrimental algae bloom with microcystin toxins dangerous to humans, pets, and wildlife for the first time since the 1970s.** These are the same toxins that killed two dogs in Portland last summer. The severe algae bloom started in July. **Toxic scums (pictured below) extending 30+ feet from the shoreline around the lake were confirmed in early September and persisted until early November.**



The presence of these dangerous toxins had a significant negative impact on usage of Webber Pond by landowners, locals, and visitors, including long-term campers and renters. Swimming, boating, fishing, and hunting were all significantly curtailed, with losses to the local economy and the potential loss of land values and repeat visitors.

Linda Bacon of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection indicated that Webber Pond was only one of many lakes that experienced unusually severe algae blooms last summer. The effects of atypical weather patterns, including larger rain events, warming waters, longer growing seasons, and increased development pressure continue to put Maine lakes and users at risk. **Ignoring the problems and allowing conditions to worsen will inevitably negatively affect Maine's economy.**

Funding for lake protection projects, including implementation of Best Management Practices, replacement of failing septic systems, stronger invasive species management programs, and treatment of lakes with chronic algae blooms are desperately needed to safeguard lake health in the future.

Please invest in the healthy future of Maine's lakes today to protect local economies, outdoor tourism, sporting and recreation businesses, drinking water supplies, wildlife habitat and so much more for all who use lakes in the future.

Very sincerely,

Susan Traylor
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