

Dear members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Ginger Eliasberg. I'm writing in support of **LD 164: An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund.**

Five generations of my family have been coming to Maine for over 60 years. We have three camps on Georges Pond in Franklin, Maine. My immediate family has lived in New York, Florida and California, but the one constant has been going to Maine every summer.

Our beloved Georges Pond had the worst algal bloom imaginable in 2018! Would you want to jump into that water?



Georges Pond, Franklin, Maine, 2018.

Our lake association was determined to fix Georges Pond and we rallied support within the community and amongst volunteers to embark on a 3-year effort to raise funds, to do the necessary science (water monitoring), to determine a viable treatment (alum treatment) and repair our lake. The alum treatments, applied in 2020 and 2021, produced record water clarity levels - almost 25 feet, the best since 1977 when records were first kept. However, this success will not last if we do not *also* address stormwater runoff, which carries phosphorus from each of our properties into the pond. If we don't stop adding phosphorus to the pond from stormwater runoff from properties, camp roads, and faulty septic systems, we will continue to have algal blooms.

We continue to work hard addressing stormwater runoff through the **LakeSmart program of Maine Lakes**, and with vital help through **Maine DEP's 319 Grant programs**.

LakeSmart educates property owners on how to use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to slow, infiltrate, and divert stormwater, and is essential to communities throughout the State of Maine. Georges Pond should be a cautionary tale to all lakes and ponds in Maine - take steps NOW to take care of your water or IT WILL TURN GREEN ONE DAY.

But LakeSmart is more than just an education program - it is community building. So many of us share such wonderful, similar experiences enjoying "*Maine -The Way Life Should Be*" on a quiet, pristine lake with family and friends - fishing, boating, swimming,

camping, the call of the loons... It has been heart-warming to meet neighbors from across the lake that have been coming to the same place for as long as we have. Volunteers from other lake associations helped us on Georges Pond and we, in turn, have reached out to help other lake associations.

Here are the reasons to support **LD 164**:

1. Property owners, municipalities, and the **State of Maine** are all stakeholders for clean lakes and ponds. Clean lakes and ponds bring higher property values and higher tax revenues.
2. The State and municipalities can't afford to clean up the lakes on their own. LakeSmart, a community-based, volunteer driven program, has the manpower and influence to establish lake-saving norms of behavior. LakeSmart volunteers do the heavy lifting but need the support of the State and municipalities to help encourage BMPs on all properties within the watershed. **No ONE of us is as effective as ALL of us together.**

LakeSmart volunteers will do a lot of heavy lifting, but FUNDING is essential. Please vote for LD 164. Thank you!

Very sincerely,

Ginger Eliasberg

LakeSmart, Coordinator

Georges Pond Association, Franklin, Maine

"The greatest threat to our Pond is the belief that someone else will save it."

(Adapted from a quote by Robert Swan, explorer.)