



January 24, 2023

Re: Support for LD 164: "An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund"

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and the Distinguished Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Colin Holme and I am the Director of the Lakes Environmental Association. Our organization is headquartered in Bridgton, Maine and we directly work in the upper Sebago and Saco River watersheds but we also partner with organizations and agencies like the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to address issues related to lakes and freshwater systems across the State. Our programs include water quality monitoring, aquatic invasives control and prevention, in-school and public education, as well as technical assistance for landowners, businesses, and municipalities.

Every January, our organization organizes a summit on recent lake and freshwater research, and folks working on lakes and ponds from across Maine and New England attend. There have been presentations on treating cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms in Maine at each of these events. The good news is that these blooms can be treated, making the lake clear again and free of noxious and potentially toxic algae. The bad news is that these blooms are becoming more and more common and the treatment is often prohibitively expensive.

The simple fact is that for most communities, there is no way that they could undertake the costs of treating a whole-lake algal bloom without financial support and guidance from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. There are already around ten lakes in the State that are experiencing harmful algal blooms and the number of blooming lakes is only going to increase as Maine's climate warms. Without a dedicated funding mechanism to deal with algal blooms, we are going to lose more iconic waters that are a part of Maine's identity and economy.

Currently, LD 164 proposes to allocate \$9 million in revenue to the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund in the two upcoming fiscal years. While large bulk allocations would be very useful, I encourage the Committee to consider yearly, and non-lapsing allocations to this fund to ensure all lakes that experience human-caused algae blooms in the future have appropriate resources to bring these waterbodies back to a natural state.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I encourage you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 164.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin Holme".

Colin Holme
Lakes Environmental Association

