

January 30, 2023

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramich, and members of the committee:

My name is Tom Renckens. I represent the Worumontogus Lake Association here in Augusta.

I have lived on Togus Pond since 2000 and come before you today to ask you to support LD 164. Maine waters are a precious natural resource that are literally irreplaceable. These lakes, rivers and streams help support the mental and physical well being of thousands of Mainers and visitors annually. We all want to continue to see eagles and ospreys soaring overhead, watch beavers swimming, and hear the haunting call of the loon on a quiet summer evening. It is our duty to preserve this vital gift that we have inherited for future generations.

Unfortunately, many of our ponds and lakes are threatened by changing climate, by invasive species, by harmful algae blooms and increasing storm water runoff that threaten the quality of those lakes. Maine lakes and waters need our help now.

Togus Pond is one of those lakes that needs our help. It is a shallow pond of 674 acres on the East side of Augusta. Unfortunately, Togus Pond is on the Maine Impaired Lakes list put out by the Maine DEP. Togus Pond has had a long history of algae blooms that are being exacerbated by a warming climate and increasing lake front development.

In 2019 we embarked on a scientific lake survey in partnership with the Maine DEP, the City of Augusta, and Ecological Instincts. The result was a 10 year Watershed Management Plan. The study showed that our algae blooms would more than likely double in frequency, leaving it green and potentially toxic during the months of August, September and October. The study offered a long term solution with an Alum treatment that could mitigate those algae blooms for 10 to 20 years.

The treatment would cost over \$750,000. The lake association has begun to raise the money for this restoration but it is challenging. This is a big project run by a small team of volunteers so additional funding from grants and state funding would be crucial to our success. If the state had monies available to help support 50% of our project then I feel certain we could reach our goal and help preserve the pristine quality of the pond for the next generation. Clean healthy water is essential for all of us to thrive.

Clean healthy lakes and waters free of invasive species, free of algae blooms, thriving with native plants, birds and mammals are essential to all of our lives. I ask you to support LD 164 so that we can preserve this pond and others like it for Maine's environment and generations to come.

Thank you for your kind attention,

Tom Reckens  
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