



“Protecting the lakes, ponds, and streams of the Cobbossee Watershed through community engagement, conservation, and education.”

PO Box 206 · East Winthrop, ME 04343 · www.watershedfriends.com
mail@watershedfriends.com (207) 395-5239

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January 30, 2023

Dear Chair Brenner, Chair Gramlich, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Toni Pied, Director of Conservation for Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed. ***The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed supports LD 164: "An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund"***.

The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed works to protect the 28 lakes, ponds, and streams of the Cobbossee Watershed, in Central Maine. The Friends' Conservation Programs help prevent, detect, and manage invasive aquatic species, as well as prevent and mitigate non-point source pollution (runoff) in our lakes, ponds, and streams.

*85% of The Friends' budget is derived from private funds, and supports maintaining and improving public waters in the state. **\$9m (for each of the next two years)**, allocated to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Lake Restoration and Protection Fund, to provide payments to help fund costs related to eligible projects in the State that improve or maintain the quality of lake waters in the State, is a **sound investment in protecting Maine's natural heritage and economy**.*

Now is the time to take care of our lakes, ponds, and streams. Impacts from climate change are threatening the health of our lakes. More intense storms drive polluted runoff into our lakes. Erosion, warmer waters, increased algae blooms, and the spread of invasive aquatic species, are impacts rapidly being driven by a changing climate. **The beautiful, clean lakes we enjoy today need protection to stay that way for the future.**

The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed urges you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 164.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Toni B. Pied

Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed

toni@watershedfriends.com

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