

Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 164:
An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund
January 30, 2023

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

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of LD 164.

My name is Brynne Robbins and I am a student of environmental policy and government at Colby College. I'm also a Maine resident and grew up on a lake. I, and many other members of my generation, feel strongly that environmental protection is our most important duty today. LD 164 will enable one of Maine's most precious natural resources to be protected at a crucial time. Today, our lakes in Maine face an onslaught of threats, from eutrophication to invasive plants. How we respond to these threats in the next few years will determine the fate of our lakes for the rest of my lifetime and generations to come.

Last summer, I worked as an invasive plant patroller on Androscoggin Lake, fighting the new infestation of variable milfoil there. We arrived at the boat launch at 6:30am every day to survey when the water was calm, spending up to 6 hours at a time in a kayak.

Invasive plants are not a lost cause, but they are only eradicated through long hours of hard work, much of which comes not from volunteers but paid employees. Watershed associations are the primary conductors of such work, and more funding is absolutely essential if these organizations are to effectively fight the invasive species and other crises currently facing our lakes.

Chances are, if you spent time on a lake growing up, it did not have invasive plants. Eurasian water milfoil, for instance, was only found in Maine in 2003. Now, while many lakes remain free of invasives, many are virtually unsalvageable. Prevention and early removal are the easiest way to save our Lakes, but that must happen now.

Growing up, I was privileged to enjoy the natural beauty of Maine lakes the way my ancestors would have known them. But, without action, my children may never know a world with clean Lakes.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass on this bill, and thank you for your time.