



Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

January 30, 2023

RE: LD 164, An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 164, An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund, on behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members and supporters.

Healthy lakes and ponds are essential to Maine wildlife and Maine's economy. Clean water is essential, for example, for Common Loons, which are visual predators that rely on clear waters to see and pursue fish. Unfortunately, the cost of keeping our lakes and ponds clean and healthy is growing each year, outpacing existing funding sources. This bill would infuse the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund with funding needed to support strategies to protect this unparalleled resource.

Funds could be used for a variety of strategies. For example, the LakeSmart program has identified hundreds of best management practices (BMPs) on more than 35 lakes across Maine that must be implemented to protect lake water quality. BMPs include planting vegetative buffers and rain gardens, as well as other simple measures such as "rubber razors" and infiltration trenches. In addition, aging septic systems in poor soils need to be replaced because they pose a threat to lake water quality. Furthermore, funding for invasive species prevention programs like the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Courtesy Boat Inspection and Lake and River Protection Sticker programs have not kept pace with inflation, rising salaries, and growing demand.

These strategies are crucial to protecting the health of Maine lakes and ponds and the wildlife that call them home. We strongly encourage the Committee to support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eliza Donoghue".

Eliza Donoghue, Esq.
Director of Advocacy