



March 15, 2023

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of LD 693

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

Dear Members of the Committee,

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **LD 693 – An Act to Protect Inland Water Quality, Shorelines, Wildlife and Public Safety by Prohibiting Operation of a Wake Boat to Create an Enhanced Wake Close to Shore or in Shallow Water**. Midcoast Conservancy’s mission is to protect vital land and waters on a scale that matters, and our service area includes popular boating locations like Damariscotta Lake.

Damariscotta Lake is home. Home to sparkling water dotted with small islands. Home to a soundtrack of trilling loons. Home to premier fishing and world class iceboating. Home to mission-based outdoor recreation and education camps that have taught thousands of kids and even hosted retreats for 9/11 first responders. Unfortunately, Damariscotta Lake is also home to growing cyanobacteria issues that are impacting our community’s ability to swim, fish, and enjoy the renewing waters of our Lake. These cyanobacteria issues would likely be exacerbated by oversized wakes within the nearshore areas of Damariscotta Lake.

Oversized wakes created by operating wake boats and boats fitted with aftermarket wake-enhancing equipment are harmful in the nearshore area of inland lakes. Wakes created by wake boats and boats with wake-enhancing equipment are significantly larger than wakes created by typical recreation boats when on plane. These wakes can cause permanent damage to lake ecosystems and personal property if operated too close to shore, or in too shallow of water. By accelerating shoreline loss and disturbing sediments on lake bottoms, oversized wakes contribute to increasing phosphorus levels which lead to algae blooms. Wake boats can also pose a danger to other lake users, including wildlife. Oversized wakes can create dangerous conditions for swimmers, paddlers, and small boat users, and can completely swamp loon nests reducing survival of eggs and chicks.

LD 693 is not a ban on wake boat use, but it limits wake boat use to areas where the lake and other users are better protected from harmful oversized wakes. Oversized wakes need a larger distance from shore to dissipate and reduce force, thus the 500 feet from shore provision. They also are more likely to disturb sediments, which is why limiting their use to areas of a lake greater than 20 feet is essential. The proposed wake boat use zone would not substantially change the area within which boats could operate in wake-surfing mode. In Damariscotta Lake over one third of the lake would still be accessible for wake-surfing mode (see attached map) and



much of the areas within the wake safety zone is already headway speed only. Additionally, due to the large number of coves and islands in Damariscotta Lake it is likely to have a larger wake safety zone than many other lakes.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the committee to vote **in favor** of LD 693 to protect inland lakes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Nease". The signature is written in a cursive style.

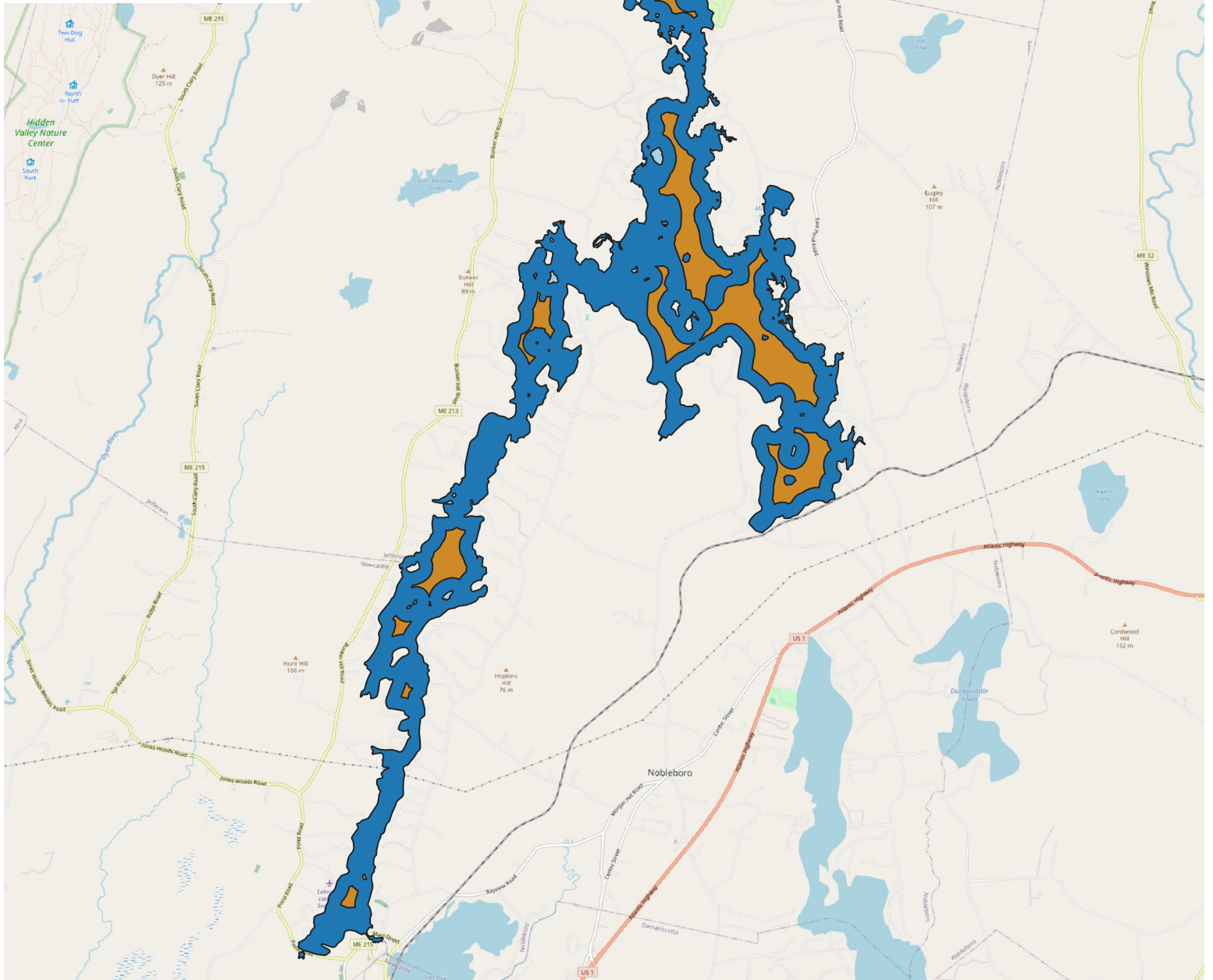
Patricia Nease

Damariscotta Lake Watershed Manager on behalf of:
Midcoast Conservancy



MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY



Proposed Wake Boat Use Zone



0 0.5 1 mi

Map By: Patricia Nease,
March 2023
Sources: OSM, MEOGIS,
Midcoast Conservancy

Legend

-  Proposed Wake Boat Zone
-  Damariscotta Lake

Patricia Nease
Edgecomb
LD 693

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