

Dear Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

My name is Edwin Barkdoll. I am a veterinarian and a research associate at the College of the Atlantic. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting LD 958, *An Act to Expand Protections to Maine's Loons from Lead Poisoning by Prohibiting the Sale and Use of Certain Painted Lead Jigs*.

Over the past few years, I have participated in autopsies to determine the causes of death of Common Loons that have died in Maine. A distressing number continue to die from lead poisoning.

Anglers, to their credit and in growing numbers, have been successfully switching to lead-free tackle alternatives like tungsten, bismuth, steel, or tin. Additionally, Maine legislation taking effect in 2016 and 2017 were steps in the right direction.

Nevertheless, loons continue to ingest lead gear directly from fish they catch or from lead they consume with the small pebbles that aid in their digestion of food. The result is that loons still suffer and die from lead poisoning. Lead poisoning is an unnecessary and cruel way to die, particularly when viable and easily obtained alternatives to lead fishing gear exist.

I urge the Committee to join the many anglers who have already spoken with their choice of non-lead tackle to support this bill and extend the protection of Maine's iconic loons. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Edwin Barkdoll VMD, PhD