

January 28, 2024

Dear Chair LaFountain, Chair Landry, and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

I am writing to urge you to pass LD 2141 to provide desperately needed funding to combat the present and growing danger of invasive species in our lakes.

My husband and I joined the Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) team on Flying Pond in 2023. I knew about the invasive milfoil in Androscoggin Lake, and wanted to help make sure that nothing like that happens in Flying Pond. What I did not realize is how difficult it is to look for and identify invasive plants and how many of them look very similar to native plants. I was out on the water with my husband sorting through hundreds of what we hoped were native plants. After learning that there was a new invasive bladderwort added to the list of potential invasive plants, we were nervous when we identified bladderwort in our section of Flying Pond. To our dismay, our bladderwort looked exactly like the description of the invasive one except that all the books stated that the invasive one was bigger. We brought the samples to Lidie Robbins at 30 Mile River Watershed Association. A local botanist out kayaking on Tilton Pond had just discovered invasive bladderwort there, so we were able to compare the two bladderworts. The good news was that ours was the native bladderwort, but the bad news was that we now had a new invasive species on another lake in our watershed.

We IPP volunteers are doing our best, as are the wonderful volunteers who do the courtesy boat inspections, but it's not enough. Tilton Pond doesn't even have an IPP team; the discovery of invasive bladderwort by someone who knew what he was looking at was sheer luck. As more and more invasive plants find their ways into Maine lakes, local organizations won't have the money or manpower to adequately monitor every lake and stream in our watershed for invasive plants or keep up with the yearly need to remove them.

I don't have to tell you how important our lakes are to our wildlife, residents, and visitors, and I suspect many others will write about that. I am writing to tell you from my personal experience that we need help, and we need it urgently. We need to do everything we can to prevent invasive plants from spreading to new lakes, and we need more resources dedicated to the removal of invasive species when they are identified. Unless you provide sufficient funding to monitor and eradicate them, the growth of invasives will outpace all our efforts and ruin our lakes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth Trehu, MD.  
576 Tower Rd.  
Vienna, ME 04360  
Flying Pond, Parker Pond, Minnehonk Lake

Beth.trehu@me.com  
(339) 832-5531