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

On behalf of the Torsey Pond Association, I would like to express our support for LD 2141, a bill that will fund critical work to reduce the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the state of Maine. *We care deeply about this issue, not just for ourselves but also for our children, grandchildren, and beyond to whom we feel a strong responsibility to pass on a healthy lake environment that they too can enjoy just as we all do now.*

We know how devastating invasive infestations can be to a lake, its wildlife, and its surrounding community, with far-reaching impacts to habitat, economic values, and tourism. All ones needs to do is to look at neighboring states and communities to see the devastating impact it can have on local communities. This work will benefit all who swim, work, live or play on Maine's lakes, ponds and streams, as well as the fish and wildlife who make these critical ecosystems their home.

The needs for managing current infestations of invasive species, as well as reducing the risk of spread, far exceed the current funding available. Last year the Torsey Pond Association in partnership with the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed and the other neighboring Lake Associations conducted over 13500 Courtesy Boat Inspections, removed over 10000 gallons of AIS, and conducted 2000 hours of plant survey and removal in the Cobbossee Watershed. While that sounds impressive, it is just the tip of the iceberg of what is needed to ensure our lakes, ponds and streams remain healthy and accessible for humans and wildlife, now and in the future.

Please note that while we support this bill, it is a bridge investment on the challenges the lakes face. Current Budget projections will not keep pace with the scope and scale of what will need to be done to combat invasives. One time funding is vital for programs with infestations to catch up, but it's not the ultimate solution...on-going funding over and above the sticker fee is needed.

We urge you to support LD 2141 to further protect the future health of Maine's lakes and ponds and to provide a sustainable ecosystem for the next generation. The investment now will have a significant return on investment for the year round and seasonal residents of our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

David W. Gross, President
Torsey Pond Association
Mt. Vernon and Readfield