

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

I am expressing my support for **LD 2141**, a bill that will rectify issues that have led to the explosive spread of invasive aquatic plants and snails on Mousam Lake and Goose Pond in Southern York County and the lakes and ponds that surround it within this pristine Maine Lakes region. ***I urge you to fund this critical legislation to reduce the spread of invasive species!***

I know how devastating invasive infestations can be to this lake since I am on the Board of the Mousam Lake Region Association, and I am currently writing a grant application for DEP funding to help address the invasion of our previously uninfested waters with Swollen Bladderwort in June 2023, ironically discovered one day **before** the practices of Clean Drain Dry were **REQUIRED** to be followed, not “encouraged” as best practices for boaters and anglers.

Now that this invasive species (along with Chinese Mystery Snails) are endemic in Mousam Lake, we must invest thousands of volunteer man-hours and in-kind donations from our lake community volunteers and donors to search out this insidious invader and remove it from our lake before it chokes out the diversity of NATIVE aquatic plants causing die-off that will starve our fish of oxygen. We also must fund and outfit with equipment a volunteer Mousam Lake Region Dive Team to manage the survey, removal, and disposal of this invasive weed, and we have had to make the hard choice to suspend our mystery snail removal operations to attempt to get the invasive weed under control before it overtakes the entire lake.

We all know that the needs for managing current infestations of invasive species, as well as reducing the risk of spread, far exceed the current funding available. Therefore I am writing a grant application that has taken me hundreds of hours to research, write, and formulate a budget to remove this weed; in order to compete for the limited funding available for ALL the infested lakes in Maine, so that we may pay for Suction-Assisted Divers to clear large swaths of Swollen Bladderwort from boating channels and launch areas and prime fishing areas in an attempt to stop the spread of it from Mousam to other lakes in Maine. This grant will provide a small subsidy toward the unsustainable amount of spending that MLRA must do from here on, year in and year out, to attempt to restore the balance of nature on our lake due to policies that did nothing to prevent the spread, due to lack of accountability and consequences, and the selfish actions of those who ignore our pleas to inspect and clean boats and trailers prior to launching in the lakes of Maine.

It is a shame that there were no consequences for failure to perform the Clean Drain Dry practices which require five days of drying in between boat launches. This was impractical and without the ability to control the extraordinary number of boats launched on Mousam Lake due to the DIFW Public Boat Launch and the draw of our warm AND coldwater fishery that makes Mousam Lake a prime fishing destination, we have been asked to take a tremendous risk of invasives due to this boat traffic which averages over 6,700 launches annually according to CBI count. Similarly, evading Courtesy Boat Inspections by using informal launch sites that do not have CBI staffers available to inspect boats and trailers for weeds adds another layer of risk.

Mousam Courtesy Boat Inspectors found 38 Swollen Bladderwort weed fragments on boats at this Public Launch site in 2023, but how many others slipped by at unmanned launch sites or at times outside the CBI staffing schedule?

I urge you to support LD 2141 in order to protect the future health of Maine's lakes.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jill C. Folsom

Resident of Alfred, ME and Summer Resident of Acton, ME
Member of the Board of Directors of Mousam Lake Region Association