

January 30, 2024 This is the letter submitted for testimonial support for:
**Testify in SUPPORT of LD 2141: An Act to Enhance Protections for
and Better Address Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations**

Wednesday, January 31
1:00 p.m.
Room 206, Burton M. Cross Building
111 Sewall Street, Augusta

My name is Pam Wilkinson, President of Little Sebago Lake Association in Gray and Windham. I represent a lake community of 1200 lot owners, and a lake body of 2009 acres, 30 miles of shoreline and approx. 25 islands. Our lake has three bodies of water connected with two narrows. The Upper and Lower Lakes are very narrow with islands and the Middle Lake is wide with the majority of the islands. While there are 1200 lot owners with multiple family and friends who use the lake, our boat ramp adds pressures to the lake that need to be addressed. To add to the pressure property owners are now renting dock space or allow moorings for outside users.

This is a letter of support for all three initiatives.

- **Appropriates \$2,000,000 to the Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species Fund to address the most serious aquatic plant infestations.** Managing existing infestations reduces the risk of spread, and benefits all who use Maine's lakes. Whether you boat, bird, swim, ski, fish, or just enjoy lake scenery, your lake experience will diminish significantly as invasives spread and degrade water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife.

Funding to implement programs to assist lake associations in funding for trying to eradicate invasive plants and species. While we work tirelessly on lakes that are affected, programs need to be in place for education and to have rapid responses to those lakes who may be in jeopardy.

- **Requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) to strengthen watercraft inspection protocols.** Recognizing that boats coming out of heavily infested waters pose a greater risk of invasive spread than those coming out of other waters, the bill asks the two departments to assess if current protocols are adequate for these waterbodies, and to develop guidelines for stronger protocols where needed.

We have managed a CBI Courtesy Boat Inspection program for over 20 years. With new invasive threats surrounding Maine's border it is important to know what is best way to inspect our launches and educate those who use the lake. Having funds to increase inspection times and BMP for entering and egressing our lakes are needed.

- **Requires DEP and IFW to review policies and procedures for surface use restrictions.** Boats passing through areas with invasive infestations are more likely to pick up plant fragments and transport those fragments to new lakes. Surface restrictions in areas of the worst infestations are a common-sense tool that can reduce that spread.

The reason for this letter is that wardens have told us we are known as the party lake and with the boat ramp we are experiencing multiple boats per day and multiple types of boats. We have seen the increase of wake/surf boats with day trippers and lake residents. The issue is that our shoreline and island shoreline are being eroded by the

large overlapping waves it creates. This adds phosphorous declining our water quality, adds sediment to the lake causing it to warm up faster and potentially declining our cold-water fisheries. The most important issue is that the wake boats are going very close to shore in areas of our invasive milfoil causing it to fragment and populate in other areas. I have managed our invasive milfoil program for over 20 years. Some of our milfoil beds are about 15 feet in height so you can see that the 20-foot downward propulsion from the wake/surf boats has a significant impact on our invasive milfoil operation by disturbing the beds and cutting the plant sending fragments downstream or onto shorelines to grow again. I have experienced such boats going through areas we have harvested for milfoil knowing the detrimental consequences. We are proud to have removed 133 tons from the lake over the past 20 years and do not want to go backwards with creating new milfoil beds. LSLA was proactive and created a Lake Friendly brochure which suggests areas to wake surf that are 500 feet away from the shoreline/islands and over 20-foot depth that we distribute each year. It is one thing to suggest but it would be better to have more teeth in a suggestion. Please take all of this into consideration during committee and help us help the State of Maine's lakes. I am including a map of our milfoil area and the brochure we have available. Should you have further questions I can be reached at pwilkinson@littlesebagolake.com or by cell 207-831-3369. Thank you for your time and hope this is passed on for further consideration and vote to pass.

<https://drive.google.com/.../1TgDWNVOv28eZ--9x.../view>

In no way does this letter want to exclude wake boats. I have had the opportunity to attempt to get up behind one and see the appeal. It was fun, it was in the middle of the middle lake with lots of depth. Provided the Maine lakes can support the activity with depth and shoreline distant measures that will protect the lake bottom and minimize shoreline erosion, the sport should be able to continue. It is just not suitable for all lakes. This is meant to be educational.

This is a letter of support for the

Sincerely,

Pam

Pam Wilkinson,

Little Sebago Lake Association President and Milfoil Coordinator