

31 January, 2024

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 fund critical work to reduce the spread of invasive species.

I care about this issue because I 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. I am currently a courtesy boat inspector for the Belgrade Lakes region, working through 7 Lakes Alliance. I also have experience trying to control invasive species in Massachusetts, including harvesting curly pond weed and water chestnuts. It is very difficult to eradicate them once they get into an area. Thank goodness for 7 Lakes Alliance's immediate response to finding curly pond weed in a local stream and to their continuing effort to harvest milfoil in local ponds.

The needs for managing current infestations of invasive species, as well as reducing the risk of spread, far exceed the current funding available. The \$2,000,000 in this bill is a good start to helping all the organizations that are raising similar funds.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kate Hollister

Belgrade, ME

Live near Long Pond, Belgrade, ME