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

I am writing in support of LD 2141, a bill that will fund critical work to reduce the spread of invasive species.

My family has had a camp on Flying Pond, in Kennebec County, for 60 years, and we now spend about four months a year there. We are deeply invested in the community: my husband volunteers as a Courtesy Boat Inspector; we are members of our lake association; and I chair the board of the 30 Mile Watershed Association. We are also engaged in a local church and Neighbors Driving Neighbors.

I urge you to consider the economic value of the lakes of Maine – and what could be lost if their water quality degrades. We seasonal waterfront residents pay an outsized share of property taxes, which are used by towns to fund schools, roads, solid waste, law enforcement and other services that we barely use. But if Maine's lakes become unswimmable, undrinkable and unsightly, then the property values that support the tax base will fall. Without a strong commercial tax base, Maine towns need seasonal residents to prop up their revenues. But vacationers can choose to go elsewhere. The financial cost of inaction would be much greater than the \$2 million in the bill.

Volunteerism is great, and we are happy to help. But the magnitude of the problem requires more expertise, more stringent measures to control the spread from one lake to another, and more enforcement by state agencies than volunteers and NGOs can do alone.

Please vote in favor of LD 2141.

Sincerely,

Nancy H. Hemphill
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