

Jeremy Smith  
Wayne, Maine  
Pocasset Lake Association & 30 Mile River Watershed  
Re: LD 2141

February 4, 2024

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

I would like to take a few minutes of your time to lend my voice as a year-round Maine resident, life-long fisherman, and member of Board of Directors of 30 Mile River Watershed Association. I also serve on the Pocasset Lake Association Board. Over the the past three years, the cleaning up and removing invasive milfoil on nearby Androscoggin Lake, in Wayne, has been an undertaking for a team of several aquatic plant surveyors.

While that area has been marked with buoys and has required the diligent work of several surveyors over a 3 year period, things have not been wrapped up and the invasive aquatic plant removal still continues. Why? Due to the invasive nature of the plants and the fragility of the plant material, it is extremely delicate work.

What do we need to help with this and other matters like them? Transparency. In our state government agencies who are responsible for helping to monitor and protect inland waters for future generations, there is a need for a new and more robust review process, new reporting methods, and greater innovation in collective communication. This internal communication and reporting process, as proposed in LD 2141, would greatly enhance collaboration between Maine DEP and IFW. This proposed collaboration and reporting process would also ensure that adequate attention is given to the protection of inland waters for the foreseeable future. In the wording of LD 2141, under section 3, the bill sponsors have set parameters for guidance on the submission of a joint-report by both Commissioners on or before January 1, 2025. This makes so much sense to me.

Transparency in the creation of a new reporting process will ensure that concerns related to inland waters in jeopardy will be brought to the forefront. Also, this work will help fellow Mainers understand the urgency of the issues at hand with a path forward for protection and maintenance, when appropriate. Some of the issues experienced are regionally-known, but I question how much knowledge is relevant for folks who live in other areas of our state. Knowledge is a must. Greater knowledge and advocacy for the protection of Maine's inland waters is something that makes a great deal sense at this time.

LD 2141 calls for the strengthening watercraft inspection protocols and surface use restrictions by having a review process by the Commissioner of the Environmental Protection and Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, followed by an evaluation of those the methods of communication of these topics - this fits with the general public's interest in our great state of Maine.

We need protect what we hold most dear. Thanks for your time,

  
Jeremy Smith