

# Testimony in Support of LD 296

## **An Act to Appropriate Funds to the Department of Environmental Protection, Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund**

*Submitted to Environment & Natural Resources Committee*

*Public Hearing: February 12, 2025 at 10:00 am*



*To:* Chair Tepler, Chair Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

*From:* Cheryl St. Peter, Friends of Cross Lake Project Manager <https://www.friendsofcrosslake.org/>

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of LD 296, which directs \$4 million for the next two years to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) *Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund*.

Lake associations like Friends of Cross Lake (FOCL) raise substantial sums to help protect and improve water quality, while all of Maine's Great Ponds (such as Cross Lake) are owned and enjoyed by ALL the people of Maine. The members of lake associations and watershed organizations dedicated to water quality already bear much of the responsibility and financial burden of keeping Maine's very public lakes clean. What other public resource in Maine is protected (both financially and through volunteerism) to such a large extent by the caring individuals and organizations committed to the resource, in place of additional state funding?

Cross Lake (located in rural northern Maine) is listed as impaired by the DEP as it does not meet the state water quality standards due to algal blooms and low water clarity. FOCL is dedicated to protecting and improving Cross Lake's water quality. We recently completed a Clean Water Act s. 319 grant to implement best management practices (BMPs) in the watershed that protect water quality with a local match of \$211,000 (50% of the total project cost). We are just starting a Phase II grant and, with DEP and other partners, plan to continue our protection efforts for however long it takes to improve our water quality. Additional funding to this important partner (DEP) for lake restoration and protection would be of great benefit to our efforts and similar efforts of lake protection organizations throughout the state.

I therefore urge the committee to vote in support of this bill to provide much needed additional funding to help protect Maine's public lakes for the enjoyment of ALL Maine people, now and for future generations of lake lovers.