

Letter in SUPPORT of LD 296, An Act to Appropriate Funds to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund

Submitted to the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

February 9, 2025

Chair Tepler, Chair Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

My name is Thomas J. Arminio. I am the president of the Greater Minnehonk Lake Association in Mount Vernon, I am on the Board of Directors of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association, I coordinate the invasive plant patrols on Minnehonk Lake, and I am also a courtesy boat inspector. The members of the Greater Minnehonk Lake Association, the municipalities and lake associations of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association, my fellow invasive plant patrollers and my fellow courtesy boat inspectors take the health of Maine lakes extremely seriously. We volunteer innumerable hours and work as a community toward the goal of clean and healthy lakes, ponds, and streams in Maine. We are dedicated to protecting and enhancing lake water quality and habitat, which will benefit everyone in the state.

LD 296 directs \$4M for the next two years to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund at DEP. The clean lakes we enjoy today will need more protective action in the future to remain clean. We know that the negative effects of climate change are rapidly putting our lake water quality at greater risk. Warmer water grows algae more quickly. More intense storms bring a larger volume of water flowing across the landscape and into our lakes, bringing unwanted nutrients that feed algal blooms. As these impacts grow, so too do the risks to lakes.

Investing \$4M to protect Maine's lakes is a wise investment. A recent University of Maine study put an annual value on our "great ponds" (lakes over 10 acres in size) at \$14.4B. An investment of \$2M each year is a small fraction of this value (just over 1%), that will pay off many times over by improving the resiliency and long-term health of Maine lakes. This contributes to the protection of that vital \$14.4B value that our state, our municipalities, and our lake communities depend on.

Maine lakes are a complicated public resource, which are owned by the people of Maine. Lakes provide endless recreational opportunities for the public. Therefore, the timing is right to fund lake restoration and protection now to avoid catastrophic impacts in the future.

Thank you for supporting this important bill.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Arminio

Captain, USN (Ret.)