

Letter of Support for LD 171 Bill on Reducing the Risk of Invasive Aquatic Plants Spread

Dear Chair Baldacci, Chair Roberts, and Distinguished Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed bill aimed at reducing the risk of the spread of invasive aquatic plants in our lakes. As a property owner on a small and fragile Maine lake, this bill is a critical step towards protecting our water bodies and ensuring the health and sustainability of our aquatic ecosystems. I commend the efforts to focus on key management actions on infested lakes, and I believe this bill will be instrumental in achieving significant progress in this area.

The bill's emphasis on strengthening watercraft inspection protocols is particularly commendable as we strive to reduce the risk of spread from our neighboring states and waterways. Recognizing the higher risk posed by boats coming out of heavily infested waters is crucial. These boats are more likely to carry invasive plant fragments that can easily spread to other water bodies, causing further infestations. By assessing the adequacy of current protocols and developing stronger guidelines where needed, the commissioners of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Environmental Protection are taking a proactive approach. This will ensure that watercraft inspections are more effective and comprehensive, significantly reducing the risk of invasive species spread.

In addition, reviewing policies and procedures for surface use restrictions is a common-sense measure that can have a substantial impact on controlling the spread of invasive aquatic plants. Boats passing through areas with invasive infestations are at a higher risk of picking up and transporting plant fragments to new lakes. Implementing surface use restrictions in areas of severe infestations can greatly mitigate this risk. However, it is essential for different agencies to apply consistent standards when setting and communicating the need for these restrictions. By encouraging commissioners to seek public comment and discuss and harmonize surface use restriction policies, this bill will promote a more unified and effective approach to protecting our lakes from invasive species that will benefit everyone.

Invasive aquatic plants pose a serious threat to our waterways, disrupting natural ecosystems, harming native species, and negatively impacting recreational activities. The proposed bill addresses these challenges head-on by prioritizing key management actions and enhancing inter-agency cooperation.

I write in strong support of LD171 and urge you to support this bill and take the necessary steps to implement the proposed measures. Strengthening watercraft inspection protocols and reviewing surface use restriction policies will not only help protect our lakes from invasive species but also preserve the natural beauty and ecological balance of our water bodies for future generations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to seeing the positive impact of this bill on our lakes and aquatic ecosystems.

Sincerely,

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