

Testimony in SUPPORT LD 296

An Act to Appropriate Funds to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund

Submitted to Environment and Natural Resources Committee

February 11, 2025

On behalf of the Annabessacook Lake Improvement Association (ALIA), we are submitting this testimony in support of LD 173.

ALIA, with support from our membership, other watershed organizations, and several state agencies, has been battling the spread of invasive variable-leaf milfoil in our lake for the last decade. It is an ongoing, unrelenting effort.

While we continually fundraise from our small but supportive lake association membership and have benefitted from several grant programs in support of restoration and protection efforts, threats to the health of our lake, and all lakes in Maine, will only continue to grow with each passing year. More funds are needed to address all of the risks to the health of our precious lake resources.

We urge the committee to discuss the highest priorities for lake protection with DEP staff and bill sponsors. We hope the bill language will prioritize small grants and other methods that incorporate and support the many lake conservation partners that DEP works with and that address the types of problems described above. Getting funding out to community lake groups will not only leverage additional funds, but they will also better meet the growing challenges of managing healthy lakes in the decades to come.

We urge the committee to vote yes on this bill.

Carol Branning (President)

John Branning (Secretary)

Annabessacook Lake Improvement Association