

Jeremy Smith
Wayne, Maine
Pocasset Lake Association & 30 Mile River Watershed
Re: LD296

February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Tepler, Chair Doudera, and esteemed members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

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 the Board of Directors of 30 Mile River Watershed Association. I also serve on the Pocasset Lake Association Board. Over the past four years, the cleaning up and removing of invasive milfoil on nearby Androscoggin Lake, in Wayne, has been an undertaking for a team of several aquatic plant surveyors.


As you may know, the work is diligent and the plant itself is extremely delicate and this makes it extremely difficult to eradicate in a timely manner. The proposal of LD 296 which earmarking of funding \$4 million dollars over the next two years would be extremely vital step towards making sure that money exists for boat inspections and other important projects that meet specific criteria to help defend and maintain the quality of lakes and other watersheds in our state.

All of the work that would be funded by the funds proposed under LD 296 would benefit taxpayers by helping to uphold the water quality and environmental standards that we need in order to preserve and protect the current ecological balance of native plants in our lake, river, and pond ecosystems. It should be of the utmost importance to consider our natural resources when appropriating funds to protect these areas from threats which are becoming more and more real with the passing of time.

The work that would be funded with this future bill would be extremely beneficial to local municipal budgets in our towns and would result in keeping Maine's waters as clean as possible and unfettered by the risks that damage and possibly destroy our vital aquatic ecosystems. As Maine has over 32,000 miles of rivers and streams as well as over 6,000 lakes and ponds covering more than a million acres of our state, it is tremendously clear that we need to do what is possible to preserve these areas and deter any threats in the foreseeable future.

Some of the issues experienced in Maine's lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, and watersheds are regionally-known but I would argue that the creation of a system to compile and track data with regards to the number of boats being launched on a daily basis in certain areas (and to create a more universal approach to boat inspections so as to keep invasive plants out of Maine waterways) would be the first steps in working to secure a bright future for our local environment. Greater knowledge and advocacy for the protection of Maine's inland waters is something that makes a great deal of sense at this time and fits with the general public's interest in our great state of Maine.

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


Jeremy Smith