

February 2025



To: The Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

**RE: LD 296 – An Act to Appropriate Funds to the Department of Environmental Protection,
Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Stacey Keefer, Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA). MMTA represents over 120 Maine businesses and an industry comprised of boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, and marine retailers. Though many of our members are coastal, we do have members located on Maine lakes reaching as far north as Beaver Cove on Moosehead Lake.

On behalf of the members of MMTA, we would appreciate funding that would support water quality protection on Maine lakes and inland waters. Lakes are important environmentally, providing critical wildlife and fisheries habitat, plus public drinking water resources. Maine's water resources require investment but also have critical returns on that investment. Recreational boating and fishing are the leading contributors to the Maine Outdoor Rec Economy. The federal government's Bureau of Economic Analysis data indicates that the activities of recreational boating and fishing surpass the combined value added by hunting, snow activities, hiking, camping, ATVing, equestrian, bicycling, and recreational flying in Maine. (source <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>).

Our organization has been involved in stakeholder discussions organized by Maine DEP and IF&W to address aquatic invasive species concerns. MMTA has supported the increase in fees for the Lake and River Protection Sticker Program, but we recognize that those funds alone are not enough to get ahead of the restoration and mitigation costs currently needed for several infestations on lakes and ponds. We would like to support the use of these funds to address aquatic invasive species issues.

We would also like to encourage the funds to be used to help support costs and expand access to waste pumpout facilities for boaters. For many years the Maine DEP has helped fund municipal and marina pumpout infrastructure through an existing successful program. Though some of our larger lakes have pumpout facilities, not all of them have the equipment and we would encourage some of these funds to be used for those purposes.

Protecting the quality of Maine lakes is important for a healthy environment, healthy wildlife, and also to maintain the quality of water that boaters and anglers seek in our world-class waterways. We hope you will consider supporting LD 296.

Respectfully,
Stacey Keefer
Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director