

# NORTHEASTERN MOSQUITO CONTROL ASSOCIATION, INC.

MOSQUITO CONTROL FOR HEALTH AND COMFORT

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February 25, 2025

Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, 132nd Legislature  
Augusta, Maine

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the Advisory Committee of the Northeastern Mosquito Control Association (NMCA), have been alerted to the suggested legislation, Maine LD356, introduced into the current session of the Maine Legislature. We feel that this proposal may have an unintentional negative impact on the ability for mosquito and tick control operations to protect the health and well-being of the public. For this reason, we are opposed to this bill.

The NMCA is a non-profit, educational organization of nearly 250 mosquito research and control professionals from all New England states (including Maine), New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The objectives of the NMCA include promoting the efficiency of mosquito abatement and related activities, through the encouragement of research, development of procedure, and the interchange of information as well as circulating among its members and other interested parties pertinent knowledge relative to mosquito abatement and related subjects. As such, we feel that is our duty to speak out on issues that may prove problematic in the process of implementing responsible, integrated vector (both tick and mosquito) control programs.

Overall, the wording of the proposed legislation is very general in nature, with the overly broad term 'pesticide' used throughout. Pesticides, as defined by 7 MRSA §604, sub-§25 encompass pest management activities as varied as fungicide application to rodent control. In addition, no mention is made of possible exemptions to the legislation for public health emergencies, where rapid vector management may be needed.

There is specific language in the bill, however, that is of concern when considering management for ticks and mosquitoes, especially when there is an ongoing animal or human disease outbreak scenario unfolding, as we have seen in Maine in 2023 and 2024. Specifically, section 4, which states that "A person may not use any pesticide outdoors within 500 feet of a property owned by another person unless the person provides written notification to the owner, lessee or other legal occupant of the property of the intent to apply pesticides at least 7 days prior to the pesticide application. This subsection does not apply to aerial applicators as defined by the board by rule. The department shall adopt rules governing notification requirements. Rules adopted under this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A."

Given the possible development time for certain mosquito species of human or veterinary health concerns (3-5 days), from the deposition of eggs to eventual the adult form emerging and flying, the proposed 7-day advance notification time could stall management actions until mosquitoes are in their adult stage, covering substantial ground and leaving humans and livestock at higher risk of disease.

The mandatory notification may also have further, unintended, consequences. For instance, implementation of a notification system could increase the overall cost of tick and mosquito control programs, accounting for the additional resources and personnel time needed for tracking affected properties, sending notices, and

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potentially following up with homeowners who do not initially respond. Second, ensuring consistent compliance with notification requirements may be difficult. Without strict enforcement, some pesticide applicators may skip or inadequately follow the notification process, which could lead to complaints from homeowners who were not informed.

Additionally, the citing of a specific buffer zone at the property edge, for application of pesticides (500 feet) may limit certain control applications designed to control problematic tick species, such as the blacklegged tick, the vector of Lyme disease. This tick frequently feeds on rodent species, which may readily reside in stone walls, a common feature in Maine's second growth woodland. Individuals using management tools commonly referred to as 'rodent tick tubes' or 'rodent bait boxes,' which kill ticks feeding on rodents, are advised to place such devices along stone walls. However, in many rural areas, stone walls are frequently used as property boundary markers thus the proposed buffer in this bill would limit the effectiveness of this type of tick control treatment.

As a result of these issues with the legislation, we feel that LD356 would undoubtedly hamper options for an integrated program to control ticks or mosquitoes and could lead to a proliferation of mosquitoes and ticks and the diseases they transmit. Consequently, we oppose the passing of this legislation as written.

Respectfully submitted,

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