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30 Mile River Watershed Association
LD 1550

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to you today as a LakeSmart Coordinator for Flying Pond in Vienna and as a board member of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association, both roles that have deepened my commitment to protecting Maine's lakes. Maine's lakes, ponds and streams are not only a treasured part of our natural heritage, but also vital to the economy and way of life. Unfortunately, lakes are increasingly threatened by pollution—especially from phosphorus and other nutrient runoff. Septic systems are often overlooked, but can be significant contributors to lake pollution. Stronger septic regulations will help minimize and eventually eliminate this factor.

Through my work with LakeSmart, I've had the privilege of working alongside a dedicated team of volunteers and lakefront property owners who care deeply about water quality. Homeowners invite us to assess their properties for runoff and we provide practical, science-based recommendations to help them become more "lake friendly." The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Most homeowners are unaware of the risks posed by nutrient runoff—especially from outdated septic systems—and are eager to take action once informed.

While shoreline erosion is a visible concern, septic systems represent a quieter threat. Septic systems can release phosphorus and other nutrients into the groundwater, which can make its way into our lakes easily from shorefront property. This nutrient loading fuels algae blooms and affects water quality and ecosystem health.

Please support LD 1550 to "improve design standards for septic systems in specific sandy soil types in the shoreland zone" to strengthen septic system regulations. Given the willingness we've seen among homeowners to protect the lakes they love, I believe these measures will be welcomed by the public.

Thank you for your time and for your ongoing commitment to Maine's environment and communities. Together, we can ensure that our lakes remain clean, clear, and healthy for generations to come.