



30 Mile River Watershed Association
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RE: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **LD 1550**

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rules to Protect Water Quality by Reducing Nutrient Pollution from Septic Systems

April 22, 2025

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association, I am writing in strong support for LD 1550, a resolve that directs the Department of Health and Human Services to change its rules to reduce nutrient pollution from septic systems and protect Maine's vital freshwater resources.

Our organization protects a watershed encompassing over 20 lakes and ponds in Central Maine. We are a coalition of seven towns, nine lake associations and two conservation organizations. Our mission is to work as a community for clean and healthy lakes, ponds and streams in our watershed.

One of the most insidious – and preventable – threats to water quality in our watershed, and across Maine, is nutrient pollution from failing or poorly functioning septic systems. When these systems “short-circuit” – allowing wastewater to reach surface waters without adequate treatment – they effectively act as direct pipelines for contaminants into our lakes.

Throughout our watershed, we see firsthand the impact that nutrient pollution has on water quality. Nowhere is this more evident than in Androscoggin Lake, which has turned green with algal blooms in three of the last four summers. These blooms are a clear warning sign that our lakes are reaching a tipping point, driven in part by phosphorus from malfunctioning or poorly designed septic systems.

Given increasing development pressure along shorelines and aging infrastructure in many lakefront communities, it is essential that we set a higher bar for how new systems are designed and installed. Without proactive measures like LD 1550, we risk repeating the mistakes of the past—only with more severe and potentially irreversible consequences for Maine's lakes.

LD 1550 represents a critical and timely step forward. By requiring that new systems incorporate stronger protections against nutrient pollution, this bill will help prevent the continued installation of systems that short-circuit and discharge wastewater directly into our waters. Updating the rules to reflect current science and best practices is a practical and necessary approach to lake protection.

Clean lakes are central to Maine's identity, economy, and quality of life. We urge the Committee to advance this legislation and support proactive, protective measures for our waters. Protecting Maine's water quality is not only an environmental priority—it is also an economic and public health imperative.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lidie Robbins
Executive Director