

Stephen Trehu
Vienna
LD 1763

Testimony in Support of LD1763:

I am writing in strong support of LD 1763, An Act to Regulate Non-water-dependent Floating Structures on Maine's Waters.

I live year-round in Vienna, Maine, and spend a great deal of time at our camp on Flying Pond, also enjoying our many other surrounding lakes. I serve on our town planning board, where I see firsthand both the strengths and limitations of the shoreline zoning ordinances.

Furthermore, I participate in our Invasive Plant Patrol, and on our Lakesmart Evaluation team.

The Floating Structure Report put together by the working group is remarkably thoughtful, representing thorough research and analysis. Their testimony will provide a comprehensive list of compelling reasons to support this bill. I am writing to provide my personal input on a few issues as a lakefront homeowner and local volunteer who is passionate about keeping our lakes and ponds clean, healthy, and beautiful for future generations.

First, these structures have an immediate negative impact on the natural beauty that is one of the greatest attributes of our lakes and ponds. Shoreland zoning rules that regulate new construction and tree removal are intended to maintain the integrity and natural beauty of our shorelines as well as to protect the health of the lakes. House-like structures on the water are unsightly clutter that will detract from the beauty of our lakes and be detrimental to property values.

Second, our lakes are in a fragile condition already due to run-off from storms and septic. Androscoggin Lake in our watershed has already succumbed to a yearly algae bloom that prevents water related activities for a significant part of each summer. Release of wastewater or other pollutants from these floating structures would be an environmental catastrophe that would cost millions of dollars and many years to address.

Third, floating structures would interfere with water sports on the lakes and with the health of the littoral zones. Kayakers and fishermen often keep close to shore where they can see and enjoy the aquatic and shoreline plants and where the fish are more abundant. Floating structures close to shore will create permanent shade that will negatively change the very nature of these areas. Floating structures further from shore will interfere with sailing and water-skiing.

Finally, many of the lakes in our watershed are within the jurisdiction of two or more towns and therefore a unified statewide regulation is necessary to avoid confusion. I urge you to do the right thing to protect this important natural resource and support LD 1763.