

To: Chair Baldacci, Chair Roberts, and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

From: Stephen Lewis
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Resident

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Date: 4-29-25

Re: Support of LD 1763

***I support LD 1763* because it prohibits non-water-dependent floating structures (NWFS) on inland and coastal waters. I do so for the following reasons:**

NWFS are a Danger to Public Safety and Navigation

- NWFS are not registered, and no one knows where such a structure would be, and EMS would not be able to find the location.
- NWFS are not built to any standards and can sink causing harm and or death to the inhabitants.
- NWFS have no requirement for safety lighting and would pose a navigational hazard at night

NWFS Damages the Environment and Creates Health Hazards

- There is no regulated sewage systems onboard these NWFS and sewage is going directly into the lakes causing public health hazards.
- Garbage from these NWFS is being thrown overboard directly into lakes as their disposal systems are not adequate to support regular habitation.
- Actual enforcement of any sanitation regulations is notoriously weak due to lack of adequate personnel, leading to gross violations and increased pollution.
- NWFS located in littoral areas damage critical fishery habitat.

NWFS are not allowed under the Public Trust Rights –

- The rights of the public to use Maine's waters and its submerged lands are known today as Public Trust Rights. The state of Maine serves as trustee of its submerged lands and is

tasked with protecting the public's right to use these lands and to obtain fair market rental value on behalf of the public in exchange for granting exclusive use of public trust resources to private entities. Any occupation of submerged lands by a privately owned structure affects the public's ability to freely exercise at least some of its public trust rights.

NWFS will cause additional Cost to the Town and State

- NWFS are not built to standards and are known to sink. Towns and or the state will have to remove them from the lakes when that happens. These structures are not registered, and no one knows who located it on the lake and the town will have no recourse in recovering the cost of removal.
- NWFS reduce the value of shoreland property and reduce the Tax Base of the town. Any shoreland property with a FWFS sitting in front of it will have a significantly reduced appraised value.
- The state opens itself to lawsuits from town and residents for not properly regulating NWFS under Public Trust Rights.

Conflicts with Shoreland Owners and Fishermen

- Confrontations between shoreland owners and NWFS have already been experienced. Conflicts between homeowners who are contributing tens of thousands of dollars in property tax and NWFS that are contributing nothing are bound to occur. The state and town may be included in extensive lawsuits.

Future significant population pressures

- Climate change is going to cause internal climate driven migration to the northern states. Maine will be a prime location for this population shift. Cheap, floating housing will be an attractive opportunity for these internal migrants.