

Written Testimony in Support of LD 2141

An Act to Direct a Portion of Unclaimed Beverage Container Deposits to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund and the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program

Submitted by:

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For the past **45 years**, I have dedicated my life as a volunteer in one way or another to protecting **Cobbosseecontee Lake**. Starting in the 80's when the average Secchi readings were 2 meters due to severe algae blooms. This has been more than a role or responsibility — it has been a lifelong commitment to a place that matters deeply to me and to the many people, wildlife, and communities who depend on its health.

Over those decades, I have seen firsthand how fragile lake ecosystems are. Clean water does not happen by accident. It requires constant monitoring, education, prevention, and the ability to respond when problems arise. I have also seen how quickly progress can be lost when funding is uncertain or insufficient. Lake protection is not a one-time effort; it is long-term, ongoing work.

LD 2141 recognizes this reality. By directing a portion of unclaimed beverage container deposits to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund, this bill provides a practical, responsible way to support the kind of work volunteers like me have been doing for decades. It uses **existing funds**, not new taxes, and ensures that money connected to environmental behavior is reinvested in protecting Maine's natural resources.

I also strongly support the bill's funding for the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program. What happens on the land directly affects our lakes. Protecting farmland and encouraging responsible land use upstream is essential to maintaining clean water downstream. Such as the concrete pits that contained farm waste and prevented runoff in the 80's. Supporting farmers and protecting working lands is part of protecting lake water quality.

After 45 years of boating the shores of Cobbosseecontee Lake, monitoring conditions, educating others, and advocating for its protection, I can say with confidence that LD 2141 would make a meaningful difference. It tells Cobbosseecontee Lake Association's volunteers that their work matters, and it shows a commitment to protecting Maine's lakes and landscapes for future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 2141.

Cheryl Soucy
