

Sarah Rice
Poland
LD 2141

To: The Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

I am writing in strong support of LD 2141, particularly as it relates to funding for the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund under section 480-N.

I am a property owner on Thompson Lake and a member of the Thompson Lake Environmental Association Board of Directors. Thompson Lake is a 4,419-acre lake located in the towns of Oxford, Poland, Otisfield and Casco. This lake has always been a part of my life since my parents moved here in 1978. The lake is not just a natural resource to me, but a community treasure that has shaped my experiences and those of countless other Maine families and visitors across generations.

Since 2008, TLEA has managed dive teams who have removed over 588 tons of variable-leaf milfoil, either by hand-pulling or by tarping dense infestations. Regrowth is a constant threat, and although we have been fortunate to receive some state funding in the past, we will likely need additional help in the future. The Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund could provide critical support for this ongoing battle to preserve our lake's health.

Additionally, TLEA completed a survey of the lake's entire 35.3 square mile watershed and in partnership with the Cumberland County, Oxford County and Androscoggin Soil and Water Conservation Districts identified 299 sites where nonpoint pollution runoff was affecting the quality of the lake water. TLEA applied for and received one Federal 319 Grant and undertook two years of remediation but has recently learned that this federal grant program has been cancelled. LD 2141 would provide essential funds to help continue working with landowners and towns to remediate erosion issues affecting Thompson Lake.

As someone who has spent a lifetime on Thompson Lake, I have witnessed firsthand both its remarkable resilience and its vulnerability. Thompson Lake is a community resource that binds our towns together and enriches all our lives. Importantly, the lake's health also directly supports our local economy through recreation, tourism, and property values that sustain our communities. Preserving Maine lake water quality is important for the surrounding economy and for the preservation of our overall environment.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Sincerely,
Sarah Rice