

Distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to provide 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, the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program and Public Defender Office Staffing.

My name is Eric Lind, and I am the President of the China Lake Association. My wife and I were fortunate to purchase a camp on China Lake in 2015, fulfilling a lifelong dream. Unfortunately, China Lake is currently classified as impaired by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection due to poor water quality. In partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection, we developed a ten-year Watershed-Based Management Plan that outlines the steps necessary to restore the lake's water quality. The estimated cost to implement this plan is a staggering \$3.16 million.

Lake restoration is a serious, expensive, and highly scientific challenge—one that typically exceeds the capacity and capability of a volunteer lake association. I often find myself stressed simply trying to understand the complexity of lake science. When that challenge is combined with the constant need to raise significant funds, it can be deeply discouraging. To be blunt, it's wicked hard.

Our lakes—Maine's lakes—are in trouble. We are loving them to death. The water quality of many, if not most, of our lakes is deteriorating. The rescue of our lakes will require a collective effort and meaningful resources, including the provisions contained in LD 2141.

By serving on this committee, you have already demonstrated your concern for Maine's natural resources. I do not need to tell you how valuable our lakes are. With over 6,000 lakes statewide, they are part of Maine's identity—part of our DNA. LD 2141 represents a critical step in restoring and preserving these invaluable resources. You have a real opportunity to make a lasting difference in the effort to save Maine's lakes. Take a bold step and pass LD 2141.

I will conclude with a quote from Senator Edmund Muskie, author of the Clean Water Act and a summer resident of China Lake:

"High quality water is more than the dream of the conservationists, more than a political slogan; high quality water, in the right quantity at the right place at the right time, is essential to health, recreation, and economic growth."

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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January 30, 2026  
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LD 2141

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