



February 4, 2026

Honorable Denise Tepler, Chair

Honorable Victoria Doudera, Chair

Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

Maine State Legislature

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

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”

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources,

The Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2141, which uses a portion of the unclaimed beverage container deposits to support the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund.

About MWUA — MWUA is a nonprofit association, based in Augusta, that provides support for water works professionals throughout the State of Maine in advocating for safe, reliable drinking water through educational and technical programming, as well as related advocacy on the local, state, and national levels. The Association was formed in 1925 and now consists of 89 utility and 71 associate members. Maine’s water utilities provide service to approximately 700,000 Maine residents, thousands of Maine businesses and public institutions, and millions of visitors to Maine every year.

Discussion — LD 164 proposes providing \$2 million annually for the Department of Environmental Protection’s Lake Restoration and Protection Fund (Fund). A high-quality source water supply is the first line of defense in protecting public health. The Fund could be used to protect or restore water quality in Maine’s public water sources. Every investment made in protecting or restoring these supplies greatly aids the ability of water utilities to provide high-quality water to the people of Maine. Failure to protect these water supplies can result in costly treatment for water utilities and customers.

Beyond drinking water supplies, Maine lakes generate \$3.5 billion annually for Maine’s economy, including 52,000 Maine jobs.¹ The opportunity to maintain and improve lake water quality is vital for both the economy of the State of Maine and the enjoyment of Maine residents and visitors.

As a final note, our Association is agnostic as to the source of funds to support the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund. This bill proposes that bottle redemption revenues be allocated to support the Fund, and we have no objection to this funding stream. However, if the Legislature believes other sources of revenue are more appropriate for this purpose, we would not object either. The critical outcome is to allocate funding to support the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund.

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/lakes/index.html>

Letter from MWUA re LD 2141 – In Support

February 4, 2026

Page 2

Overall, the ongoing financial commitment provided by LD 2141 is an investment MWUA strongly encourages you to support.

Thank you for your consideration,



Michael Commons, *Chair*
Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee
Maine Water Utilities Association

cc: James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative Counsel
Roger Crouse, P.E., MWUA, President of the Board of Directors
Edward Molleo IV, MWUA, Executive Director



Michael Cummons
Maine Water Utilities Association
LD 2141

February 4, 2026

Honorable Denise Tepler, Chair
Honorable Victoria Doudera, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

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”

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources,

The Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2141, which uses a portion of the unclaimed beverage container deposits to support the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund.

About MWUA — MWUA is a nonprofit association, based in Augusta, that provides support for water works professionals throughout the State of Maine in advocating for safe, reliable drinking water through educational and technical programming, as well as related advocacy on the local, state, and national levels. The Association was formed in 1925 and now consists of 89 utility and 71 associate members. Maine’s water utilities provide service to approximately 700,000 Maine residents, thousands of Maine businesses and public institutions, and millions of visitors to Maine every year.

Discussion — LD 164 proposes providing \$2 million annually for the Department of Environmental Protection’s Lake Restoration and Protection Fund (Fund). A high-quality source water supply is the first line of defense in protecting public health. The Fund could be used to protect or restore water quality in Maine’s public water sources. Every investment made in protecting or restoring these supplies greatly aids the ability of water utilities to provide high-quality water to the people of Maine. Failure to protect these water supplies can result in costly treatment for water utilities and customers.

Beyond drinking water supplies, Maine lakes generate \$3.5 billion annually for Maine’s economy, including 52,000 Maine jobs.¹ The opportunity to maintain and improve lake water quality is vital for both the economy of the State of Maine and the enjoyment of Maine residents and visitors.

As a final note, our Association is agnostic as to the source of funds to support the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund. This bill proposes that bottle redemption revenues be allocated to support the Fund, and we have no objection to this funding stream. However, if the Legislature believes other sources of revenue are more appropriate for this purpose, we would not object either. The critical outcome is to allocate funding to support the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund.

Overall, the ongoing financial commitment provided by LD 2141 is an investment MWUA strongly encourages you to support.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael Cummons, Chair
Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee
Maine Water Utilities Association

cc: James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative Counsel
Roger Crouse, P.E., MWUA, President of the Board of Directors
Edward Molleo IV, MWUA, Executive Director