

Lakes belong to, and benefit, all the people of Maine. Maine lakes contribute billions in total net economic value to the state's economy. Communities with fewer resources are unable to raise funds to protect lakes that belong to everyone. It is always less expensive to keep lakes healthy than to remediate a lake with water quality in decline or already compromised. Increasing the resiliency of lakes today—with projects that reduce erosion and runoff—is a prudent investment in our future. Community groups and lake associations raise millions in private funds to protect public resources. This level of fundraising is not sustainable in the face of growing challenges to lake health. Many communities have completed watershed surveys to identify sources of pollution, but need funding to implement remediation projects.

LD 2141 can leverage private funding by providing matching grants, thereby encouraging more collaboration between the state and the private sector. Bottle deposits are public funds that, if unredeemed, should be directed to a clean, healthy environment that benefits all people. The Act will provide \$2 million annually to the DEP's Lake Water Quality Protection and Restoration Fund. The Maine DEP works hard to protect lakes and support lake groups, but that agency is underfunded and understaffed. This funding could create one or more positions to support lake protection work. The capacity to enforce existing shoreland zoning restrictions that protect water quality is severely limited and needs to be addressed; more staff and more funding are needed.

I fully support LD 2141 and urge the Committee to approve and advance it.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom Arminio
President, Greater Minnehonk Lake Association
Mount Vernon