

Dear Members of the Maine Legislature,

I am writing in strong support of LD 2141 and to urge you to invest in the long-term health of Maine's lakes, rivers, and bays by dedicating bottle redemption funds to lake and watershed protection projects.

I have long enjoyed the pristine waterways of the State of Maine and am deeply fortunate to have personal ties to two of them. My family has property on Parker Pond in Mount Vernon and on Pleasant Point in Merrymeeting Bay, at the mouth of the Androscoggin River. These places are not just scenic backdrops to me—they are living systems that have shaped my understanding of stewardship, responsibility, and the quiet work required to keep Maine's waters healthy.

For many years, I have been involved in water quality testing with Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, helping to monitor the impacts of upstream pollution on one of Maine's most ecologically rich estuaries. I have also participated in aquatic plant surveys with the Parker Pond Association for over twenty years. Through this work, I have seen firsthand how profoundly human activity affects our waterways—sometimes slowly and subtly, sometimes with alarming speed. I have also seen how careful monitoring, early intervention, and sustained community effort can make a real difference.

These volunteer-driven efforts are invaluable, but they cannot succeed without adequate public funding. Lake protection, invasive species monitoring, and water quality testing all require resources—trained staff, equipment, data analysis, and long-term planning. Hope alone will not protect our waters; investment will.

At a time when environmental protections are being weakened or dismantled at the national level, Maine has a unique opportunity to lead (DIRIGO!). By directing available bottle redemption funds toward lake and watershed protection, the state can make a meaningful, practical commitment to public health, environmental resilience, and the preservation of the places that define Maine's identity.

The health of our waterways is inseparable from our own health and survival. Clean water supports our ecosystems, our economy, our recreation, and our sense of place. LD 2141 is a thoughtful and responsible step toward ensuring that future generations inherit waters that are living, not merely remembered.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Sarah Cowperthwaite

SARAH COWPERTHWAIT

Brunswick

LD 2141

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