

To: Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
From: Jackson Chadwick, Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026



RE: Testimony in Support of L.D. 2141: An Act to Direct a Portion of Unclaimed Beverage Container Deposits to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund and the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and respected members of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Jackson Chadwick, and I am the Advocacy & Organizing Director for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ). I am also a Bangor resident. MYCJ empowers youth under 30 to advocate for climate action and justice through legislative efforts, community engagement, and educational programs. Our members include high school and college students, as well as young adults contributing to Maine's workforce.

On behalf of MYCJ, I am writing in support of L.D. 2141: An Act to Direct a Portion of Unclaimed Beverage Container Deposits to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund and the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program.

Maine's lakes and farmlands are among our most precious natural resources. Healthy lakes support our outdoor recreation economy and supply drinking water. Farmlands are vital to our local food supply and rural communities. Maine youth have grown up with these resources at our fingertips, and we recognize the need to protect them now and for future generations.

Programs such as the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund (LWQRPF) and the Working Farmland Access and Protection Program (WFAPP) have helped restore lakes and farmland across our state. However, sustained funding is essential for the long-term success of both programs. Our lakes need protection from algal blooms, and our farms from PFAS.

L.D. 2141 proposes allocating a portion of unclaimed beverage container deposits to these two programs. Each year, between \$10 and \$17 million in bottle deposits go unclaimed. As a result, that money remains with beverage companies and is not used for a public purpose. We have an opportunity to change that precedent and direct a portion of those unclaimed funds to both LWQRPF and WFAPP.

Please protect Maine's lakes and farmlands for our youth and future generations by voting "ought to pass" on L.D. 2141.

Thank you kindly for considering our testimony,

Jackson Chadwick
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