

Diana McLaughlin
Wayne
LD 2141

Dear members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing in strong support of L.D. 2141, which would provide \$2,000,000 from unclaimed beverage container deposits annually to the Lake Water Quality and Restoration and Protection Fund.

Maine's lakes, ponds and entire watersheds are increasingly impacted by the detrimental effects of climate change, poor shoreland protection practices, invasive plant species and other threats. In the 30 Mile River Watershed, which includes 25 lakes, ponds and streams in the towns of Vienna, Mount Vernon, Chesterville, Fayette, Readfield, Wayne and Leeds, one of our once beautiful water bodies is choked with invasive swollen bladderwort and another has invasive milfoil and recurring, toxic, lake-wide algal blooms. While the Department of Environmental Protection, the 30 Mile River Watershed Association and the respective towns and lake associations are working diligently to address these problems, more funding is needed both for prevention and remediation.

Clean and healthy lakes, ponds and streams are important to Maine's economy, the quality of our environment and natural areas, outdoor recreation and overall quality of life. They belong to everyone; not only owners of shoreland property. For example, a small town owned park which includes a swimming area on Lovejoy Pond in Wayne is enjoyed seasonally by residents of three local towns.

It can take years of scientific monitoring, corrective actions and millions of dollars to mitigate the effects of declining water quality or an invasive aquatic plant (or invasive fish) species infestation, and in many cases, a damaged waterbody can never be fully restored to pristine health. It is much more cost effective to prevent the decline of our watersheds than to treat problems after they occur. Courtesy boat inspections, invasive plant patrols, regular water quality monitoring, watershed surveys, education of landowners on erosion prevention and enforcement of local shoreline zoning rules are all examples of actions that help to protect our watersheds.

Passage of this bill will not create an additional burden to Maine taxpayers, since the money will come from unredeemed bottle and can deposits.

Please vote to pass L.D. 2141.

Respectfully,

Diana McLaughlin
30 Mile River Watershed Association, Board
Lovejoy Pond Improvement Association, Board