



For the Love of
OUR LAKE

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February 23, 2026

Letter of Support – LD 2141

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the 200+ members of Friends of Lake Winnecook (FOLW), I write to express our strong support for LD 2141 and its effort to dedicate a modest portion of unredeemed beverage container deposits toward Maine’s environmental protection programs.

The Committee’s thoughtful discussion around the accounting of bottle redemption funds highlighted an important truth: clean water, healthy farmland, and responsible stewardship of our natural resources are public priorities that deserve reliable and sustainable funding sources. LD 2141 represents a balanced and practical step in that direction.

At Unity Pond (Lake Winnecook), our community has rallied around the “Let’s Make it Clean, Not Green” campaign — a grassroots effort focused on restoring water quality, reducing nutrient pollution, and protecting long-term ecological and economic value for our region. While we have been fortunate to have a generous “Silent Friend” donor step forward with significant matching support, most lakes and ponds across Maine do not have access to that level of private philanthropy and depend on stable public funding sources to move critical clean water work forward.

While Initiators of Deposits play an important role in Maine’s economy, the argument that all unredeemed deposits must remain with industry does not reflect the broader public interest. Beverage producers help create a significant waste stream, and it is reasonable that a portion of these funds be reinvested into protecting the very environment that sustains Maine communities, businesses, and recreation.

Other states have demonstrated that directing unredeemed deposits toward environmental programs is both feasible and effective. New York allocates 80% of unredeemed deposits to public environmental funds, and Vermont directs unredeemed deposits toward clean water initiatives. By comparison, LD 2141 proposes only a modest 25–30% reinvestment — a fair and measured approach that supports environmental protection while maintaining the existing redemption framework.

Clean water benefits everyone — residents, municipalities, farmers, outdoor recreation, and even the beverage industry itself. Investing in environmental programs today reduces long-term costs, strengthens local economies, and helps ensure that Maine’s natural resources remain an asset for future generations.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance LD 2141 and support the reinvestment of unredeemed deposits into Maine’s environmental protection efforts. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Brian Levesque, President
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