

In support of LD 164: An Act to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Voting to Fund the existing Lake Restoration and Protection Fund now and in the future is the only way Maine will stay ahead of the increasing threats to water quality. We understand that the Fund is primarily designed to address the needs of Impaired and Threatened Lakes, to restore the lakes with worst water quality and to protect others from becoming impaired. But we know that the needs for restoration and protection go beyond phosphorus levels.

This Fund is crucial, but so is adequate support for the Department of Environmental Protection so they have the staffing and resources to respond to the growing demand for their services across the State. It's of little benefit to list lakes as "Impaired" or "Threatened" and not have the funds to take action.

My husband and I are fortunate to live on the shores of Alamoosook Lake. We are volunteer stewards as part of the Alamoosook Lake Association. In 2022 Alamoosook joined 169 other lakes on the "Threatened Lakes" list, but we've learned that when the lists are updated Alamoosook will be moved to the "Impaired" list, primarily because of delayed efforts by the Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery to mitigate phosphorus levels in its effluent to meet DEP standards. We would be in much worse shape if our shallow lake didn't flush seven times a year.

Also in 2022 Alamoosook was placed on the DEP's list of "Infested Lakes" due to a 2021 suspicious plant sample testing positive for an invasive milfoil. The DEP Invasive Aquatic Species and Dive Team became significant members of our Response Team and aided our efforts to assess the extent of infestation, evaluate samples, and extract suspicious colonies. We will continue to rely on their guidance and expertise as we develop a management plan and pursue more testing to resolve the mystery we currently face--a possible hybrid. Our challenging situation is multiplied across the State.

All of us are here today because we understand the importance of being good stewards of our environment. Financially, the value of Maine's lakes and ponds can be viewed through the lens of tourism and property taxes, but Nature-ally, we can envision the mental health value of these scenic resources, recognize our obligation to protect all watersheds as sacred to our existence, and understand the necessity of educating future generations in their restoration and protection.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 164 for the sake of our treasured Maine lakes now and for future generations to come.

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