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Testimony of Rep. Walter Riseman introducing
**LD 1342, An Act to Increase Funding for the Prevention and Control of
Invasive Aquatic Species for your consideration**
Before the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and distinguished members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, my name is Walter Riseman and I proudly represent House District 83 which consist of the towns of Harrison, Bridgton, and Denmark in the Maine House of Representatives.

Today, I present LD 1342, An Act to Increase Funding for the Prevention and Control of Invasive Aquatic Species for your consideration.

I bring this bill before you today to reduce the risk of invasive aquatic species getting into the waters of the state of Maine and from spreading within our waters.

Simply put, this bill proposes to increase the *Lake and River Protection Sticker* fee by \$10 starting next year and having this sticker fee increase by \$2 every two years starting in January 2026. A motorboat owner is required to have this sticker on their boat to operate on Maine's inland waters. For in-state registered boats, the sticker is included in the registration process. Out-of-state registered boats need to buy a separate stand-alone sticker.

The current cost of this sticker for in-state registered boats is \$15. This legislation would increase the cost to \$25. In-state registered boats make up about 90% of the boats found on Maine lakes. The current cost of the sticker for out-of-state registered boats is \$45 and this legislation would increase the cost of the sticker to \$55.

This fee increase is absolutely necessary if we want to keep invasives aquatic species out of Maine's lake and ponds.

The cost of existing prevention and control efforts in the state of Maine has jumped up in the last few years because of rapidly increasing labor and equipment costs. Even before these recent program cost increases, the funding supplied by the sticker fee was not adequate to properly fund existing, highly effective programs. The sticker fee is the primary funding mechanism for all invasive aquatic species prevention and control work in the state and this funding stream is

currently matched at nearly a one-to-one ratio by non-profits who run courtesy boat inspection programs and removal programs for milfoil and other invasive species.

While more funding for existing programs is definitely needed, many lakes and ponds in the state that have been deemed a high risk of infestation by the Maine DEP have no existing prevention programs and no safety net. This is a recipe for more infestations by invasive species. As more and more of Maine's ponds succumb to invaders, the cost to control them will skyrocket and the impact on our waters and the people of Maine will be devastating.

Motorboats are the primary vector for moving invasive aquatic species into and within the state of Maine. Compared to the costs of owning, operating, and maintaining a motorboat on Maine's freshwater lakes and ponds, this fee increase is insignificant.

We need to act now to help save our lakes and help keep invasive control costs to a minimum. The mechanism to do this is already in place but it needs adequate funding and this proposed fee increase will be borne by the user group that is most responsible for the spread of invasive aquatic species.

I would also like to note that there is another bill being proposed by Representative Hasenfus of Readfield, which is requesting a \$10 increase to the *Lake and River Protection Sticker* fee as well as a directive for the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic Plants and Nuisance Species. Because these two bills are similar, I would be amenable to their possible combination and mutual discussion.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.