

January 31, 2024 - Testimony Supporting LD2141

To: Chair LaFountain, Chair Landry, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee Members

From: Susan & Christopher Heard, Wayne property owners and seasonal residents

Dear Committee Chairs and Members,

Our family and extended family have owned and enjoyed our camp on Lake Pocasset since 1981. Chris and his brother and sisters have been vacationing on the lake since 1962. The well-being of Lake Pocasset is of deep concern to all of us.

This is why I'm here today. We are very much in support of LD2141 and any other ongoing efforts to control Variable Milfoil and other invasive plant infestations, not only in Lake Pocasset but also in the surrounding lakes.

As a shallow body of water with a maximum depth of 20 feet, Pocasset Lake is becoming an easy target for invasive plant species. We are witnessing the changes here in Central Maine that are increasing the likelihood of invasive species making their way to, and taking over, our lake. Temperatures are increasing. The lakes don't freeze solid in the winter as they used to. Water temperatures reach the mid-80's by the first week of July and algae blooms, which were once rare, are now found throughout Lake Pocasset by the end of July.

Unfortunately, our neighboring lakes, Androscoggin, Maranacook, and Anabesacook have already fallen victim to invasive plant infestation. We need to act today before more Maine lakes are jeopardized by these rapidly spreading invasive species.

If we consider the cost of LD2141, we must also consider how Maine lakes are an economic engine for the state. Tourists, part-time, and seasonal residents bring taxpayers and provide customers for local businesses. Houses are built and renovated, providing jobs for full-time residents. People come to Maine to have a chance to slow down and enjoy life. All of this is driven by the stunning beauty and consistency of our pristine lakes. Whatever the state invests now in protecting our lakes will be returned exponentially with economic stability for future generations.

We strongly urge you to pass LD2141. Investing in combating this problem now is crucial in keeping the wheels from falling off the ecosystem that drives the region on so many levels. Monitoring lakes and quickly eradicating invasive plants, consistently monitoring and controlling public boat launches, and increasing awareness among residents and property owners is crucial in order to get a handle on the problem.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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