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Testimony of Rep. Tavis Hasenfus introducing
**LD 171, An Act to Enhance Protections Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plant
Infestations in Inland Waters of the State**
Before the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Tavis Hasenfus, and I represent House District 57, which is the communities of Readfield and Winthrop. I am here before you today to introduce **LD 171, An Act to Enhance Protections Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State.**

Maine lakes have significant importance to me, and I strongly believe that the health of our lakes is paramount to the future of our state. I come from a district with approximately 10 great ponds and lakes. These lakes are cherished by residents and visitors alike. We also have one of the most at-risk lakes in the state for invasive aquatic species; Cobbossee Lake is threatened by an infestation of Eurasian water milfoil, variable leaf milfoil and frog bit.

These infestations, if left untreated, will turn our favorite swimming, paddling and boating areas into floating carpets of unnavigable weeds.

The bill before you today will go a long way toward mitigating the spread of invasive and nuisance species.

This bill tasks the experts within the department with convening stakeholders to develop a plan of action and then implement said plan. Part of this plan of action must be to identify statutory and regulatory changes which are necessary to prevent future spread of invasive and nuisance species in order to protect our inland waters from further outbreaks. Specifically, this bill directs the Commissioners of DEP and IFW and the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species to address

- Best practices for watercraft inspections. This is paramount as watercraft are the vectors responsible for spreading invasives. It is my hope that these experts will be able to develop and implement a plan to review rules and statute and propose changes.
- Ways to improve the current surface use restrictions (SUR). In order to address the threat of invasives, SURs need to be put in place expeditiously. They must also be conspicuous

enough to ensure the public does not enter restricted areas. Current protocols are not enough.

Finally, I would ask this committee and the administration to use this bill to address any minor, technical changes that may have been left out in drafting this bill that are necessary to achieve the intended goal of this proposal.

I feel it is worth mentioning that local lake organizations, nonprofits and private parties have invested countless hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars in addressing the threat that invasive species pose. However, the local communities cannot address this threat on their own. The state must step up to address this, because while the problems are localized for now, it takes just one fragment and these invasive species could take root in other waterbodies with devastating effect.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you have for me, but you may wish to save the technical questions for the stakeholders with us today.