

Testimony of Peter Meulendyk
Before the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
On Behalf of the Cobbosseecontee Lake Association

IN SUPPORT of LD 171 An Act to Enhance Protections Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plant
Infestations in Inland Waters of the State

2/12/2025

Good afternoon, Chair Baldacci, Chair Roberts, and distinguished members of the committee. My name is Peter Meulendyk. I am a resident of Manchester, ME and here today representing the Cobbosseecontee Lake Association (CLA), for which I serve as its Vice President.

The mission of CLA is to serve as proactive stewards of our lake committed to protecting and improving all aspects of water quality, lake beauty, wildlife, and enjoyment of the lake for current and future generations.

CLA supports LD 171 because it will enhance the Title 38 Sec 1862 program as enacted in 2001. The Commissioners of DEP and IF&W, in consultation with the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic Plants and Nuisance Species, jointly implement the program to prevent infestation of, and control of, invasive aquatic plants.

The enhancements provided by LD 171 are a requirement for monitoring of inland waters of the State known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants and the program must include the consideration of more stringent watercraft inspection protocols and surface use restrictions on inland waters known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants. Section 1864 provides for emergency authority to regulate surface use including the restriction of access to or restriction of use of any watercraft on all or a portion of a water body that has confirmed infestation of an invasive aquatic plant.

In 2018 Eurasian Water Milfoil was found on Lake Cobbosseecontee during a survey of watercraft launch sites. There were multiple plants at a single location. Plants were removed or treated with an herbicide. In response to the growing threat of invasive aquatic plants, the Lake Association conducted broad-reaching education, membership, and fund-raising programs to unite the lake community in the fight against these invasive plants. We work closely with Friends of Cobbossee Watershed and State agencies to be proactive in the continued monitoring, surveying, and removal or treatment process.

Fast forward to 2024, during which we found 16 sites where invasives were identified, removed, or treated on our 5500-acre water body. This has become a “forever” mission, and we will need the help of common-sense legislation, such as LD 171, to put in place action-based programs that will result in timely responses to any further spread of IAPs within our lake, or other lakes in the Cobbossee Watershed, or to other lakes in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I am prepared to answer any questions.