



Testimony in SUPPORT LD 296, HPO196

An Act to Appropriate Funds to the Department of Environmental Protection, Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund

Submitted to the Committee On Environment and Natural Resources, February 12, 2025

Good morning, Chair Tepler, Chair Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Committee On Environment and Natural Resources.

I'm Katie Meikle and the President of the North Pond Association (NPA). I've owned waterfront property on North Pond since 1993 and have lived full time on the pond since 2013. The NPA is a non-profit organization with over 155 active members including 23 business members. Our 13 member volunteer Board of Directors is dedicated to our mission which is to advocate for the stewardship of the natural environment of North Pond and Little Pond ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

North Pond is a shallow lake with a maximum depth of 20 feet covering just over 2,500 acres including Little Pond. It is the second lake in the Belgrade Lakes chain surrounded by the towns of Smithfield, Mercer, and Rome. Sadly, our pond has suffered algal blooms each of the past 7 years. Last summer a significant infestation of the invasive aquatic plant, Curly Leaf Pondweed was discovered at the northern end of the pond. These impairments to our water quality have a significant negative impact on the ability to recreate on the pond and present potential hazards to the native flora and fauna which in turn has a negative impact on our local economy.

With the assistance of 7 Lakes Alliance, the NPA has embarked on an ambitious campaign: the "North Pond Remediation Fund" to restore our water quality. The cost of an Alum treatment to mitigate the algal blooms is expected to exceed \$3 million. Culling the CLPW last year cost over \$6,000 in diving fees and is expected to be an ongoing and increasing annual expense.

North Pond has a completed 9-Element Watershed- Based Plan (2024-2033). We are working to compile the data from a recent (2022) Septic Survey and hope to have funds to provide financial incentives for septic inspections of aging systems. We believe that we are on the right track, but with a small volunteer crew, the work can sometimes seem a bit overwhelming.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and respectfully ask for your support for LD 296, a bill which directs \$4 million for the next two years to the Lake Quality Restoration and Protection Fund at DEP.

Warm regards,

Katie Meikle, President North Pond Association

North Pond Association
PO Box 44
Smithfield, Maine 04978

Katie Meikle MD
105 Wesauking Lane
Smithfield, Maine 04978
meiklekatie@gmail.com
(207)-615-7025