

Testimony of Peter Meulendyk

Before the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

On Behalf of the Cobbosseecontee Lake Association

IN SUPPORT of LD 296 An Act to Appropriate Funds to the Department of Environmental Protection, Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund

2/12/2025

Good morning, Chair Tepler, Chair Doudera, 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 the 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. Our Lake Association is over 700 family members strong out of a potential 900 property owners on the lake.

In response to the growing threat of invasive aquatic plants, our Lake Association conducted broad-reaching education, membership, and fund-raising programs to unite the lake community in the fight against these invasive plants. All 5 towns bordering Lake Cobbossee have been helping with financial support on an annual basis. Our budgeted expenses for this year total \$300,000 and 87% of those expenses will go to lake health programs such as Courtesy Boat Inspections, IAP monitoring, and surveying, plant identification, and plant removal or treatments.

CLA supports LD 296 because it provides one-time funding for projects that meet specific criteria and improve or maintain the quality of lake waters in the State. The \$2 million per year for 2 years would certainly be beneficial to the most at-risk lakes for the immediate needs of the Lake Water Quality and Protection Program. While there may be a hesitancy to consider a one-time biennium funding, it makes sense in this instance, because of the immediate risk of declining lakeside property values if the more aggressive invasives, such as the Eurasian Water Milfoil that is in Cobbosseecontee, take hold and spread to other water bodies in the State. It does seem reasonable to ask the State to participate in a meaningful way to help preserve the \$14.4 billion annual value to the economy provided by Maine's great ponds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LD 296 and we urge committee members to vote yes on this bill. I am prepared to answer any questions you may have.