

**Testimony in SUPPORT LD 296, An Act to Appropriate Funds
to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund**

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

My name is John Crowley. I'm a resident of Augusta and a board member for the Worromontogus Lake Association, also known as Togus Pond, as well as the President of the Albee and Griffin Point Road Association. In both positions, I work to safeguard and improve the water quality of Togus Pond. I assist with taking water quality samples every two weeks during the summer, that are sent to the state for testing. I, like many of my neighbors, have installed buffer zones along the shoreline to force runoff to filter through soil and plant life before entering the lake. In 2008 we began working with the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to bring Alewives back to Togus Pond. Fish that hadn't been in the lake since the dam was built over 100 years ago. That program has been a huge success and now, hundreds of thousands of fish return each year through the fish ladder that was built four or five years ago.

While working on the road, we strive to make the road safe and passible while making sure that as little of the gravel ends up in the lake as possible. Over the years we have re-based large sections of the road and used better material, that is less likely to move. We have replaced and enlarged all the culverts on the road, and we work to provide ditching to slow the water down, to allow sediment to drop out.

For the 20 years that I have lived on Togus Pond, I've wondered if the lake would turn green from an algae bloom each summer. In more recent years, I've wondered when it would turn green. It usually happens in mid to late August, but we have had blooms as early as July 4th weekend.

That is until this past summer. For several years the lake association has been working with DEP, the City of Augusta, and landowners around the lake to prepare for the first of two alum treatments. Through the hard work of the association, we raised \$400,000 primarily from property owners on Togus Pond, as well as donations from the City of Augusta, and a few local businesses and members of

the community. That treatment was applied in April, and it was shocking how clear the water was all summer long. There needs to be a second alum treatment within the next year or so to lock in the benefits that we have worked so hard for, and we are working to raise that money now.

Because Togus Pond is a great pond, with public access, it is a state asset. A state asset that is being supported almost exclusively by the local residents.

Togus Pond is a working-class lake. We don't have any summer camps where millionaires send their kids for the summer and are willing to kick in funds to keep their kids from swimming in green water. Most of us work in the local area or are retired from state government. We've shown that we are willing to do the work necessary to clean up the mistakes of those who came before us, as have other residents on other lakes in the area.

A fund like the one proposed in LD 296 would help us get over the hump financially, for some of the programs that we need assistance with, while caring for a state asset.

I ask that you vote yes, on LD 296.