



30 Mile River Watershed Association
P.O. Box 132, Mount Vernon, ME 04352
(207) 860-4043 info@30mileriver.org www.30mileriver.org

RE: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **LD 296**

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

February 12, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of LD 296.

My name is Lidie Robbins and I am the Executive Director of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association based in Mt. Vernon. This watershed encompasses over 20 water bodies in Central Maine. We are a coalition of seven towns, nine lake associations and two conservation organizations. Our mission is to work as a community for clean and healthy lakes, ponds and streams in our watershed.

I am testifying today to strongly support the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund that would provide much-needed funding to protect one of Maine's most precious resources.

In the summer of 2020, an invasive aquatic plant was found for the first time in our watershed, in Androscoggin Lake. The following summer, Androscoggin Lake turned pea-soup green with a lakewide algal bloom for the first time in 20 years. It has had algal blooms three out of the past four summers. It is a lake in crisis, and those who love it are heartbroken and fearful about its future.

Since 2020, our organization has devoted as many resources as we are able to our work on Androscoggin Lake in an effort to save it. For four seasons, we have fought the invasive variable leaf milfoil with intensive surveying and removal. For the past three seasons, we have collected extensive water quality data to better understand the causes of the algal blooms.

Like many lakes in Maine, Androscoggin Lake's water quality is threatened by phosphorus – a nutrient found in soil, septic waste, animal waste, and fertilizers. Phosphorus feeds algae, and very small increases in phosphorus can cause algae populations to increase and water clarity to decline. Higher levels can cause algal blooms.

Growing pressure from development, along with climate change driven increases in lake temperatures, and intense storms washing higher levels of polluted runoff into our lakes, are putting them at greater risk. Invasive aquatic species are spreading throughout the State.

The work needed to protect and restore lakes in our watershed takes more resources than our organization can provide, and the costs are growing every year. **This fund will provide resources to do this vital work.**

The communities in our watershed, and throughout Maine, depend upon the health of these lakes for our local economy, our tax base and our quality of life. Our lakes are one of our most valuable natural resources. Losing them would truly be devastating to our state. This fund provides an opportunity to invest in a better future.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 296.

Thank you,

Lidie Robbins
Executive Director