

132nd Legislature

*Senate of
Maine*

Senate District 6

Senator Marianne Moore

3 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0003

(207) 287-1505

Marianne.Moore@legislature.maine.gov

**Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on
LD 1448, An Act to Provide Winter Access to the Bog Lake Public Boat
Launch in Northfield
April 14, 2025**

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Marianne Moore, and I proudly represent Senate District 5, which includes all of Washington County as well as 16 Communities in Eastern Hancock County. I speak today to present LD 1448, *"An Act to Provide Winter Access to the Bog Lake Public Boat Launch in Northfield."*

Last May, I was contacted by a constituent who had concerns over the lack of public access to Bog Lake in Northfield during the winter months. He told me the gate is closed and locked at some point in early December and isn't reopened until mid-April.

Bog Lake has long been a cherished spot for ice fishing and other winter activities, drawing enthusiastic participation from residents and visitors alike. In recent years, camp owners around the lake have come together to organize a winter ice fishing derby—an event that has grown significantly in popularity and now supports various schools throughout the county. Entire grade schools have even attended, turning it into a meaningful community tradition.

However, a major obstacle continues to hinder participation: the difficulty of getting school buses and families close enough to the lake. The most practical solution would be to allow winter access to the public boat landing.

Last winter, camp owners, who already have access to the lake, reached out to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to request the gate be opened during the winter months, or at the very least for the duration of the derby. While

the local office was supportive and tried to assist, the response from Augusta was a firm “absolutely not.”

When my office reached out, IFW informed us they had to get a DEP storm water permit, which required significant and expensive water management infrastructure. In order to protect those expensive systems and the road, they keep the gate closed in the winter and ask people to use the parking area at the entrance. They refuse to let it be open for even just one day.

However, back in 2016, when the landing was proposed and approved by the town, it was presented as a means to provide *fair and equitable* access to the lake—language taken directly from the department’s own fish stocking program policy. Unfortunately, the current restrictions contradict this very principle. Of the 176 water access sites managed by IFW, there are only four that are gated in this way for the winter.

The camp owners at Bog Lake are not asking for anything extraordinary... just a fair opportunity to continue a growing tradition that benefits our community and local students. This bill would ensure that more people can enjoy this great natural treasure.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important matter. I ask your support of LD 1448 and would be happy to answer any questions you might have at this time.