

TESTIMONY LD 2141

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 4, 2026

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR TEPLER AND CHAIR DOUDERA AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE. I AM DOUG KAVANAUGH FROM ORONO. I RISE TO SUPPORT LD 2141, AN ACT TO DIRECT A PORTION OF UNCLAIMED BEVERAGE CONTAINER DEPOSITS TO THE LAKE WATER QUALITY RESTORATION AND PROTECTION FUND AND THE MAINE WORKING FARMLAND ACCESS AND PROTECTION PROGRAM.

I RESIDE ON THE SHORE OF PUSHAW LAKE, BORDERED BY THE TOWNS OF ORONO, OLD TOWN, HUDSON AND GLENBURN. I AM A BOARD MEMBER OF MAINE LAKES AND OF THE GREATER PUSHAW LAKE ASSOCIATION. I AM THE COORDINATOR OF THE LAKESMART PROGRAM ON PUSHAW.

LAKESMART IS THE SIGNATURE COMMUNITY-ACTION PROGRAM OF MAINE LAKES. WE ARE A NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR CONSULTING SERVICE FOR SHORELAND OWNERS. OUR PURPOSE IS TO IDENTIFY EROSION WHICH CARRIES DETRIMENTAL PHOSPHOROUS AND NITROGEN AS WELL AS HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES INTO THE LAKE. WE RECOMMEND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO SLOW, DIVERT, AND ABSORB RUNOFF. OUR MOST EFFECTIVE RECOMMENDATION IS TO PLANT A 10-15 FOOT WIDE BUFFER CONTAINING 5 LAYERS OF VARIED

PLANT MATERIAL ALONG THE SHORE. TALL TREES DOWN TO GROUNDCOVERS AND MULCH ARE USED TO CUSHION RAIN AND ABSORB SURFACE WATER. EFFECTIVE BUFFERS ARE THE VERY LAST STAND OF PROTECTION FOR OUR LAKES.

LAKESMART IS A GROWING PROGRAM, EMPLOYING TWO COORDINATORS ON THE STATE LEVEL WITH 127 VOLUNTEER EVALUATORS. SOME LAKES ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR RECOMMENDATIONS USING YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS VOLUNTEERS OR OTHER INTERESTED CITIZENS. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY EVALUATIONS DO NOT RESULT IN IMPLEMENTATION. MANY WHOSE PROPERTIES WE EVALUATE ARE TOO OLD, TOO SICK, OR FINANCIALLY UNABLE TO AFFORD THE EXPENSE OF IMPLEMENTING OUR RECOMMENDATIONS.

FUNDING FROM LD2141 COULD HUGELY IMPROVE SUCCESS IN SEVERAL WAYS.

1. RAISING AWARENESS -- BY PUBLISHING A PAMPHLET EMPHASIZING THE THREATENED STATE OF OUR LAKES; BY PROVIDING FUNDS FOR LAKE ASSOCIATIONS TO MAIL THIS TO SHORELAND OWNERS FROM THEIR LOCAL LAKE ASSOCIATION. THIS IS EXPENSIVE. ONE MAILING TO PUSHAW RESIDENTS COSTS US 26% OF OUR REVENUES. IT MAY JUST BE JUST HUMAN NATURE, BUT MANY DO NOT RECOGNIZE THERE IS PROBLEM THEIR LAKE UNTIL THEY ARE LOOKING AT A FETID, UNUSEABLE GREEN MASS OFF THEIR DOCK.
2. IMPLEMENTATION OF LAKESMART RECOMMENDATIONS COULD BE IMPROVED BY PARTIAL/FULL GRANTS TO

REIMBURSE HOMEOWNERS FOR DESIGN, MATERIALS, AND LABOR TO IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES. THIS WOULD INCLUDE THOSE PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE SHORELINE RESTORATION PROJECTS. SHORELINE EROSION IS MOST OFTEN BY THE WEATHER, NOT HOMEOWNER NEGLIGENCE. EITHER WAY, WHEN IT'S GONE, IT'S GONE. IN ALL OF THIS, PRESERVATION AND PREVENTION IS THE KEY.

3. ENCOURAGE TOWNS TO GIVE A COMPENSATORY TAX BREAK TO SHORELINE OWNERS WHO IMPLEMENT CONSERVATION PROJECTS.
4. LASTLY, LD 2141 FUNDS COULD BE USED BY THE DEP TO DIRECTLY FUND THE STAFFING NEEDS OF THE LAKESMART PROGRAMS OF MAINE LAKES.

USING LD 2141 FUNDS TO SUPPORT LAKESMART PROGRAMS WOULD GREATLY INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTIONS TO PROTECT THE LAKES OF MAINE.

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING MY COMMENTS.