

Testimony of Peter Meulendyk  
Before the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
On Behalf of the Cobbosseecontee Lake Association

On 02/04/2026, IN SUPPORT of 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

Good afternoon, Chairs Tepler and Doudera, and distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Peter Meulendyk. I am a resident of Manchester, and I'm here on behalf of the Cobbosseecontee Lake Association, representing residents, visitors, and businesses who depend on a healthy Lake Cobbosseecontee.

I'm here to voice strong support for LD2141.

Cobbosseecontee is one of Maine's most treasured lakes – a major driver of recreation, property value, and local economic activity. But like many lakes across the State, it faces growing pressures from stormwater runoff, shoreline erosion, warming water temperatures, and the constant threat of invasive species. These challenges for a growing number of Maine bodies of water are increasing faster than the resources available to address them.

Local lake associations like ours work hard – raising funds, organizing volunteers, and partnering with towns. We are fortunate to be able to work with the Cobbossee Watershed District and collaborate with the Watershed Friends. But volunteer efforts alone cannot keep pace with the scale of the need. LD 2141 provides the stable, predictable funding that lake protection has lacked for decades.

Directing a portion of the unclaimed bottle deposits to the Lake Quality Restoration and Protection Fund is both practical and fair. Maine consumers generate these deposits, and reinvesting them in Maine's waters aligns perfectly with the bottle bill's environmental purpose. This approach doesn't raise taxes, doesn't touch the General Fund, and brings Maine in line with what many other states already do.

At our seasonal camp on Cobbossee, we have seen how DOT road improvements to redirect water from upper properties along state-maintained roads have increased run-off directed into the lake, creating additional water quality issues. I suspect this occurs around many other ponds and lakes.

For Lake Cobbossee, this funding would mean more effective erosion control, improved watershed planning, and the ability to respond quickly to emerging water quality threats. These are concrete, high-impact actions that protect property values, support local businesses, and preserve the lake experience that defines our region.

Once a lake declines, the cost of restoration skyrockets, and LD 2141 recognizes that prevention is the smartest investment we can make.

On behalf of the Cobbosseecontee Lake Association, I respectfully urge you to support LD 2141 and help Maine lakes remain clean, healthy, and resilient for generations to come. Thank you for your time.