

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

February 4, 2026

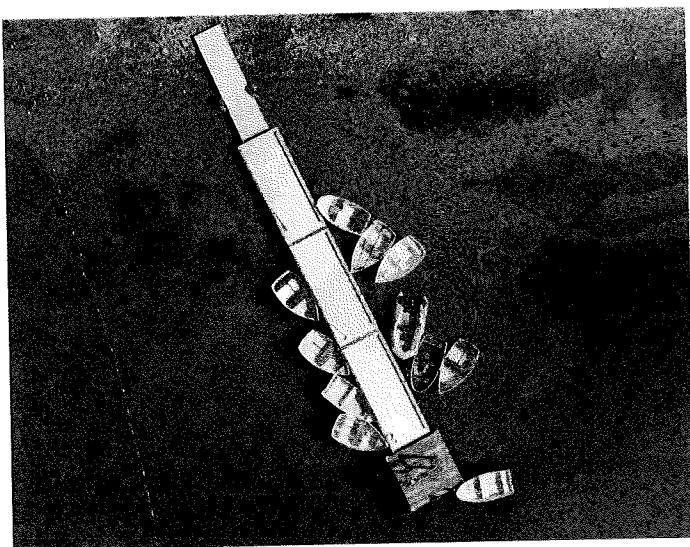
RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 2141: "An Act to Direct a Portion of Unclaimed Beverage Container Deposits to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund, the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program and Public Defender Office Staffing"

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Lidie Robbins and I am the Executive Director of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association, based in Mount Vernon. We work to protect more than 25 lakes, ponds, and streams across seven towns in Central Maine, in partnership with local municipalities and nine lake associations.

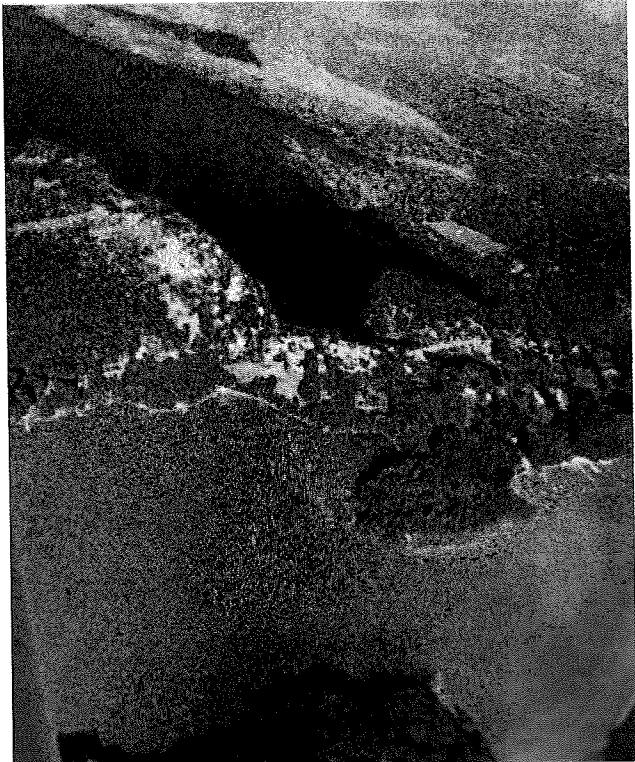
Lakes are central to what makes this region special. They support our local economy, sustain property values, and define our quality of life. But they're fragile, and the threats facing them are growing as development increases and rainfall becomes more intense due to climate change.

Imagine spending every summer swimming in your favorite lake. Now imagine that by July, the water begins to turn green like split-pea soup and stays that way for the rest of the season. You can no longer see your feet when standing in waist-deep water. It's not safe for you or your pets to swim. That is what a Harmful Algal Bloom looks like.



Above: Androscoggin Yacht Club, 10/5/2025 (PC Josh Robbins)
Right: Androscoggin Lake, 9/9/2025 (PC 30 Mile)





Left: Pocasset Lake (top) and Androscoggin Lake (bottom), 9/2025 (PC Henry Cooper)

Right: Androscoggin Lake, 9/16/2025 (PC Terry Brooks)

This is exactly what happened in 2025 when Androscoggin Lake in Wayne and Leeds experienced a lake-wide Harmful Algal Bloom. It has now bloomed four of the last five years. For residents and visitors, these blooms have dramatically reduced recreational opportunities and quality of life – and if the blooms continue, property values will inevitably suffer.

In the town of Wayne alone, shorefront property on Androscoggin Lake is assessed at nearly \$87 million and generates more than \$1 million annually in property taxes. That represents 27% of the town's entire tax base from a single lake. Lakefront property across all lakes in Wayne accounts for 71% of the town's property tax revenue. When lakes decline, municipal budgets are at risk.

Restoring a lake after recurring algal blooms is extremely expensive. On Androscoggin Lake, we are still in the data-collection, analysis, and planning phase to determine what actions might reduce future blooms. That work alone will cost more than \$100,000 over the next two years, before any on-the-ground restoration begins. Those efforts can cost millions.

LD 2141 is critical because it supports both **restoration and prevention**. Preventing algal blooms—by addressing erosion and polluted runoff—is far more cost-effective than trying to fix a lake once it is impaired. One of the biggest sources of runoff is inadequately designed roads that cannot handle the heavier rainfall Maine now experiences.

Current state funding is simply not sufficient to meet the scale of this problem. LD 2141 is a smart investment in protecting one of Maine's most valuable public resources—our lakes—while safeguarding municipal tax bases, public health, and local economies.

I urge you to support LD 2141 so that Maine's lakes remain clean, accessible, and treasured for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Lidie Robbins
Executive Director
30 Mile River Watershed Association