

Feb. 4, 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

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Panther Pond in Raymond has boulders along the shore where I reside; 60 years ago they were clean granite. In the past 30 or so years I have had to scrub off the slippery coating of slime known as periphytons which are algal forms. For over 20 years I have volunteered monitoring Panther Pond and scores of other lakes around the state in the AIS realm which has brought me face to face with spots of degradation of our surface waters.

Currently we have a green, stringy, linguini type of metaphyton in a cove at the mouth of a brook on the western side of the lake. This alga has coincidentally appeared with the development in 2020 of a subdivision on a ridge whence this brook emanates. In order to restore the water quality in this cove and along its shore we are trying to pinpoint a cause. Nutrients are suspect, but what? Phosphorus, Nitrogen, E coli? From the subdivision or more local septic systems or run-off.

This season we will instigate a testing of the waters multiple times (before and after rain events) throughout the season in 4 to 5 places so the total number of kits for N and P tests will cost an estimated \$418. E coli tests cost \$37 each and we hope to do only 8 samples for \$296 but, we are investigating a private lab where we could test for only \$20 each for \$160 total. We look to our lake association for some financial help but it has quite a few places needing remediation after having performed a thorough watershed survey at the end of this past August. 319 Federal grants are not available this year. This is just a tiny example of the battles we all face in ensuring the quality of our surface waters, many of which supply town drinking water. We are not alone, as the lake above ours has sprouted strange new forms of algae. We on Maine lakes turn to the state for expert advice and implementation of training and treatment for such things as alum application, run-off issues, and enforcement of environmental laws. We volunteers cannot, nor can DEP cover all the tasks alone.

Everyone is coming hat in hand, year after year, but the endorsement of this bill would change that financial dynamic, as it is not a one-time allotment but an on-going annual provision that would give us more solid footing we could budgetarily rely on in meeting water quality challenges, and free you up from having to listen to our begging. Three years ago at the end of January 2023, my husband and I stood in this same room asking for a one-time assistance for a lake restoration and protection fund. Hopefully, with this bill passage, we have left Groundhog Day behind.

I also support the other aspect of this bill as agriculture and farming need provision and protection; this is an area dear to my heart having raised sheep as a 4-H'er and leveled apples in an orchard where I worked during high school. I appreciate your reading my humble input.

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