



Testimony of the Maine Youth Camp Association

Presented to the  
Joint Standing Committee On Environment And Natural Resources

In Opposition to LD 743, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Invasive Aquatic Species

Representative Jessica Fay

April 5, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Newell Augur. I am a resident of Yarmouth and I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Youth Camp Association (“MYCA”), the non-profit organization of children’s camps throughout our state. MYCA is opposed to LD 743, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Invasive Aquatic Species.

Children’s camps are an important part of the fabric of our state, providing an outdoor educational experience for children from Maine, from across the country and around the world. Maine is the leader for children’s camping. The first camps were established here more than 100 years ago. Today, there are approximately 175 children’s camps in Maine serving an estimated 40,000 children annually. About half of all camper days are filled by Maine children. In a normal season, Maine youth camps are responsible for approximately \$500 million of economic activity.

Camps provide an outdoor living experience for children that builds social skills and accentuates the importance of our natural resources. This learning is experiential, in that campers learn by doing. Camps offer this in a setting where children learn how to get along with peers, develop habits of self-actualization and discipline, experience success and learn how to overcome failure. And all this, perhaps for the first time, without the presence of their parents.

We are fully supportive of the broader goals of this legislation. As stewards of Maine’s environment, Maine Youth Camps want to make sure that the lakes and rivers our campers enjoy are pristine. Our success is dependent upon that. We recognize that invasive species is a continuing challenge and, further, that there are circumstances requiring the Department to respond quickly to address this problem.

We are required to make sure that the water our campers use for drinking, cleaning and cooking – wherever the source - is always clean. All Maine youth camps are licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services and part of that regulatory oversight includes strict monitoring of water safety. To be sure, the camp is responsible for making sure that the water our campers use is safe.

Among the seventeen transient non-community public water systems drawing water from a Maine lake that would be affected by this Legislation, four are youth camps. Currently, these public water systems are required to give their written consent before a chemical control agent can be used on the water body. As written, this bill would remove that requirement.

We appreciate the outreach that the Department has made to our association and the resultant dialogue that has taken place with a number of different stakeholders. We are confident that a solution can be reached that will simplify the process for controlling invasive species while at the same time preserving input from all public drinking water systems and protecting the adults and children who depend upon those water systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions and will be present at the work session.