

Lydia Landesberg  
Waterford  
LD 164

Hello, I am Lydia Landesberg and I am the president of the board of directors of the Lakes Environmental Association. I reside in Waterford, Maine. I am writing to urge you to support LD 164.

We are fortunate in Maine to have abundance of clean, fresh water lakes. Our lakes play many important roles. They are stores of potable water, habitat to fish and aquatic mammals and plants, economic drivers of Maine's tourism industry, and an important source of year-round recreation for our residents. Proximity to a clean lake adds value to any real estate property.

I cannot stress enough the importance of allocating sufficient resources to safeguard Maine's lakes. The challenges of climate change, aquatic invasive species, and increasing development continue to threaten our lakes and will only grow larger. To ignore these challenges in the present will lead to greater costs in the future. Prevention is always cheaper than mitigation and the reality of this is borne out by a number of lakes in Maine that are turning to Alum treatment to reverse the unpleasant and often toxic effects of algae blooms. These treatments can run into the millions of dollars and the correction is not permanent. The treatment must be repeated every 10 or so years. Once a lake is contaminated it cannot be restored, it can only be rehabilitated; a compelling argument for investing in prevention.

My experience with the Lakes Environmental Association has taught me about the strong emotional attachment that people form with lakes. I thought I was unique when I moved to Maine to live on the lake where my children attended summer camp. I am not! Many of our largest and most loyal donors are people who spent summers on a lake in Maine and made it a goal to return and live on that lake year-round. Many of our members are people who return to the Greater Sebago Lakes Region every summer with their families. These good folks fill our restaurants, shop in our stores, and patronize the many boating and fishing related businesses in our towns. When a lake succumbs to algae blooms or becomes choked with invasive aquatic species, the potential for economic loss from falling property values and lost business revenue is huge.

Please vote in support of LD 164 to Fund the Lake Restoration and Protection Fund to help ensure that our lakes remain a source of pleasure and economic opportunity for the people of Maine well into the future.