

KEYES POND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION
Sweden, Maine
Monica Bigley, President

February 17, 2021

Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
IFW@legislature.maine.gov

RE: LD 349 An Act To Prohibit the Use of Personal Watercraft on Keyes Pond in the Town of Sweden

Dear Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 349 An Act To Prohibit the Use of Personal Watercraft on Keyes Pond in the Town of Sweden.

As the President of the Keyes Pond Environmental Protection Association (“KPEPA”), I ask that you support L.D. 349, which would add Keyes Pond in Sweden to the long list of lakes on which “personal watercraft” (i.e., jet skis) are prohibited.

KPEPA is a Maine non-profit corporation that has been in existence since the early 1970s. In addition to waterfront landowners, KPEPA’s membership includes community members who enjoy fishing and swimming on Keyes Pond. There are only 40 lakefront lots on the lake. The largest is that of the Camp Tapawingo—a summer camp for girls that has been operating there for 101 years. None of these property owners has a personal watercraft and no one has ever seen one operating on the lake. At last summer’s annual KPEPA meeting, everyone was surprised that Keyes Pond was not on the statutory list and all supported attempting to have it placed on that list.

Jane Lichtman, the owner and operator of Camp Tapawingo, has authorized me to represent her interests at the IFW Committee Hearing on February 22, 2021. Ms. Lichtman has concerns about the safety of her campers if personal watercraft are permitted to operate on Keyes Pond. Campers swim across the lake every day of the summer season. In addition, assuring the well-being of young girls who are learning to kayak, sail, and paddleboard would be more challenging when confronted with wakes created by personal watercraft.

KPEPA believes that Keyes Pond is an excellent candidate for the no-personal-watercraft list. It is only 192 acres and very shallow in much of that area. It is popular for fishermen, kayakers, paddle boarders, and distance swimmers.

The unique environment of Keyes is home to wildlife worth preserving. It is a place where loons have nested and raised their chicks every year for as long as residents on the pond since the 1970s can remember. Eagles and osprey regularly fish its waters, and beavers, otters, and moose all call it home. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife stocks the pond each fall with brook trout in order to augment the thriving cold-water fishery. Human residents spend evenings on their docks enjoying the quiet interrupted only by the cries of loons.

In short, the use of personal watercraft would be incompatible with the traditional uses of Keyes Pond and would lead to more harm than good. We believe that KeyesPond is an excellent candidate for the no-personal-watercraft list and we ask you to support legislation to add it to that list.

Sincerely,

/s/ Monica Bigley
President
Keyes Pond Environmental Protection Association