

TESTIMONY OF ANDREW L. BLACK OF CUMBERLAND, MAINE

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 349

“An Act to Prohibit the Use of Personal Watercraft on Keyes Pond in the Town of Sweden”

SPONSORED BY: Representative Sawin Millet of Waterford

DATE OF HEARING: February 22, 2021

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and other members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Andrew Black and I am a resident of Cumberland, Maine. I am no longer a permanent resident of Sweden, Maine, but I still own a camp on Keyes Pond and I spend as much time there as possible. There is sometimes confusion about the spelling and pronunciation of it, but those from Sweden spell it “K-e-y-e-s” and pronounce it “Kīz”.

I am speaking in favor of LD 349 because I believe that Keyes Pond is precisely the type of pond that should be added to the list of Maine lakes where the operation of personal watercraft is prohibited. Please note that the term “personal watercraft” is the legal term for jet skis and similar motorized watercraft that have inboard motors that power jet pumps. *See* 12 M.R.S. § 13001(23). It does not include traditional motorboats or any non-motorized watercraft. Attached to my written testimony is a table of the 57 Maine Lakes for which the Legislature has already prohibited the use of jet skis. The table includes the locations, sizes in acres, and maximum depth in feet. Also attached is the Department’s lake survey map for Keyes Pond. You can see from this list that these lakes are located throughout Maine and vary in size from a few acres to over 5000 acres. It should also be noted that the Department has adopted rules that either prohibit all motorized watercraft or substantially limit the size of motors on another 84 lakes that effectively prohibit the use of jet skis on those 84 lakes. *See* 09-137 C.M.R. ch. 13, § 13.07. Therefore, there are currently at least 141 lakes in Maine on which jet skis are prohibited by law.

Keyes Pond is a 192-acre pond with a maximum depth of 42 feet which places it near the median of these other lakes in these measures. There is relatively little development on the pond and it has a thriving cold-water fishery. Each fall the Department stocks the pond with brook trout. And each spring fishermen land some sizeable trout. James Pellerin, a State biologist with the Department, has told me that Keyes Pond is one of finest brook trout fisheries in his region.

Every summer a wide array of people come to Keyes Pond and enjoy it in a variety of ways. There are many canoeists, kayakers, paddleboarders, and fishermen who are happy to comply with the voluntary limit of 5 horsepower engines. The result is a very quiet and peaceful lake where fish and wildlife thrive. Despite its small size, every year as far back as anyone can recall there has been at least one nesting pair of loons and sometimes two breeding pairs. Each year at least one chick has survived through the fall. It has also become a destination for those who enjoy distance swimming on a lake.

As far as my informal but extensive research has shown, no one has ever attempted to operate a jet ski on Keyes Pond. In fact, most people I spoke with assumed that they were prohibited. The possibility that someone may someday desire to operate a jet ski on the lake is concerning, because it would be highly disruptive to the way this pond has traditionally been used and detrimental to the fish and wildlife that live in and around it. This bill is a result of that concern. It is simply a proactive effort to formally put in place a law that will preserve the status quo and help ensure that the public can continue to use Keyes Pond in the many ways that it has traditionally done.

I ask you to support this bill and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Andrew L. Black