

Dear Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

I am writing to ask you to support LD 394, "An Act to Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife in the Issuance of a Permit to Hold a Regatta, Race, or Boat or Water-ski Exhibition."

Wildlife is one of the state's most important natural resources and distinguishing characteristics. As beloved symbols of the natural beauty of Maine, loons, moose, lobsters, bears, and other species draw hundreds of thousands of tourists to the state annually and contribute materially to Maine's \$6.2 billion tourist industry.

Maine statutes provide wide ranging protections for wildlife. But a curious omission leaves loons and other wildlife unprotected in the face of inherent risks associated with state-sanctioned regattas, boat races, and water-ski exhibitions. Under the current permitting statute, Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has no authority to consider wildlife impacts in the issuance of such permits, no authority to attach wildlife protection conditions to such permits, and no authority to deny any such permit application on the basis of dangers to resident wildlife.

LD 394 will give IF&W the tools it needs to protect Maine's precious wildlife resources, without negatively impacting any constituent group. It will have no impact on recreational boating, except perhaps to enhance the enjoyment of Maine's resident wildlife by recreational boaters.

As this is a nicely written form letter that addresses particular concerns that should be considered, I would like to add that our Little Sebago Lake Association's mission statement goes like this - "Our mission is to protect, restore, and improve our lake's water quality and fragile ecosystem. We will create and nurture a community of lake stewards, educate user on lake safety, and always be mindful that the human needs must be balance with the needs of the natural environment." With this said, we understand the various types of enjoyment on the lake and encourage them but activities that may be harmful to wildlife need special consideration. An analysis of a lake should be done for each permit as to the impacts (such as nesting periods), and potential harm to loons or any wildlife prior to issuance of a permit. I encourage you to be their voice and support LD394, so they are not in any harm during one of these events. Sometimes the balance should be in favor of the ones that cannot speak.

I ask that you support this important legislation to Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife during state-sanctioned Regattas, Races, and Boat or Water-ski Exhibitions.

Thank you.

Pam Wilkinson

LSLA President