

Lucy Birkett  
Freeport

Greetings to Chairman Dill and the joint committee, and thank you all so much for your work on this issue. I've been following along and I know it's a lot. I am writing to urge you to support LD 89 and oppose LD 114. The noise level limits proposed in LD 114 offer virtually no protection from even the loudest airboats. Even the nighttime limit exceeds acceptable noise standards for industrial zones, not to mention residential areas, or areas of ecological importance. This is unacceptable. I urge you to support LD89, which offers more reasonable noise limits.

This intense and unique noise affects everyone who lives anywhere in my neighborhood, --- anyone who wishes to work, or sleep, rest, talk, relax—anyone who wishes to recreate on the water, or fish or swim from the beaches or rocks along the shore.

I'm one of those who live near but not on the river- and I can tell you there is nothing like being woken by an airboat at midnight, at 3:30 am, or at any time, by what actually sounds, and feels, like an air raid. It hits one deep in the adrenal system- believe me! There is no rhythm to it, it goes on and on, and there is no going back to sleep. It would be like if an airplane or helicopter was not just going by your house, but circling round it. It feels like a threat.

Last summer I was really having a hard time with it during one particular week in August. The airboat came in at 4 am one day, 4:30 the next day, 5 the next day, 5:30 the next. I remember one day, probably day 3-4, I was pretty exhausted, determined to take a nap, I didn't think to count the hours till the airboat would be back, fell asleep on the couch unfortunately just moments before the airboat was on it's way back. It was at that point that I thought: this is seriously affecting my livelihood and my well being, and that of my neighbors as well. (I think there are about 70 people in my neighborhood. I don't know how many people live along the Harasseket)

I've seen little kids on the street holding their ears (and sometimes crying!) when the airboat is in the river. I am not kidding. We have elders in the neighborhood. We have several immune compromised folks in the neighborhood. Whether it's covid times or not, we need to take care of our health. My husband and I often work from home, and there have been many times when airboat noise has made it impossible for us to hear or speak on a phone or a conference call. So what about my livelihood, what about my work? Some of us need to get a good sleep because we all have jobs and responsibilities, and to make a living.

And some of us have had a long day, and would like to walk, or drive, to the public access spot – which in my case is a little town owned tidal beach -- and enjoy a conversation with a neighbor, or slip into a canoe and go for a paddle, or just lie there. People come from all over Freeport and neighboring towns to enjoy this little public spot, bringing their kids for swimming, striper fishing, or launching their kayak. We all need a little peace place, a little peace time.

And there are real concerns about the wildlife— whether they be the horseshoe crabs, the great blue heron, the shorebirds, the upland birds, the owls, the mammals. We know that many, or most, animals use their hearing to protect themselves from predators, as well as to hunt, and also to mate. Wildlife are constantly in survival, and 10 minutes of deafening noise may put their lives at risk, and could cause hearing damage (as it does or for humans). We are all responsible to learn more about this; our kids and grandkids need us to do this.

I don't know how many of you have experienced airboat noise firsthand—and I'm talking about the airboat noise at the decibel level and frequency that we are discussing. I very much appreciate that a demonstration was attempted last winter. I was able to get home in time to make out the sounds on the river, but was perplexed and concerned that it was not anywhere near the level of noise we were getting in the summer from the airboat. All I could think was that the demonstration was done during that short period when there was snow on the ground and perhaps that affected the measurements. I hope that a demonstration.

I appreciate that LD 89 includes a provision for environmental impact study, which I

feel is crucial.

Thank you so much for your time, and for receiving my testimony.

Respectfully,

Lucy Birkett