

April 11, 2021

***Dear Commissioner Judy Camuso, and fellow members of the Dept of Inland Wildlife and Fisheries,***

**Thank you for your work on the topic of airboat noise to this point and we trust in you as our elected officials to find the best path.**

I stand in Opposition of LD114: Act to Address Airboat Operations in the State.

When Rep McCreight introduced her bill, she tried to convince that airboats had been in the state for 25 years, were widely adopted by Marine wardens and clambers and they were here to stay. That airboats have been operating in Maine for 25 years is disingenuous. Airboats and airboat noise is a very current problem. That airboats are here to stay is one thing but that airboat noise is here to stay is another.

LD114 does NOT address airboat noise, it is yet another attempt to normalize it. You must at this juncture accept that we have a serious problem, not necessarily with airboats but with airboat noise. Please listen. It seems yet again that harvester's (and this bill is not limited to them) interests are held over the common good. It was determined that 75dB was the level of acceptable noise for boats. It was the point of balance between boat users and all living things in its wake. LD114 does nothing to strike a balance. Much thought and work has gone into suggesting a compromise. The land base measuring was adopted but not the decibel levels. Don't be fooled to think that the bar has gone from 100 dB to 90, it has not.

My family and my neighborhood have been deeply burdened by the introduction of airboats these last two summers on the Harraseeket River in Freeport. They are a complete harassment. When Reb McCreight introduced her bill, there were about 40 persons who came to Augusta to raise the red flag. In Dec 2020 when the ruling was withdrawn there were 200 persons raising the red flag. Please listen now. There will be 2,000 or 20,000 next time if airboat noise at these toxic levels persist.

How bad is bad? If you have to scuttle up the children and run inside and shut the doors and windows, it is not right. That's by day. Being woken to airboat noise really sets you up for a good day- crying kids, barking dogs and a nice headache. The worst is the anticipation of the noise, you know the tide schedule and you know you don't want to be out gardening or watering the lawn and certainly not sitting out enjoying the day. I am opposed to LD114 because it simply will steal from me and my neighborhood the right to peace, quiet and enjoyment of property.

Noise at these levels is toxic. "My family has vacationed in Maine for sixteen years, but if we have to listen to airboats, we'll go somewhere else." was a quote that came in last summer. And now a quote from our nesting eagles, ospreys and herons...oh, they don't have a voice but they will go somewhere else too.

Distinguished committee members, please remember this is a matter of noise. I oppose LD114 because

should it pass, you set a precedent. What other essential equipment is next? We have to believe that your willingness to accept a special class for airboats is because they are being used by harvesters, but there is no limitation in this bill. It seemingly allows this noise level for airboats in general. Affected residents are terrified already that the number of airboats used for clamming will grow. The Harraseeket River is a fairly closed in strip and noise already reverberates from shore to shore. Are we going to tolerate airboat tourism? What will prevent the general use of airboats to reach high water or just joy ride over sand bars. This doesn't paint a picture of the "way life should be".

Deteriorating access, challenging environmental changes and improved efficiency have been noted as reasons for harvesters to look to airboats. Local governments do work to address access (and certainly more can be done), but have no control over airboat noise. Doesn't seem to be a fair tradeoff or incentive to provide best solutions. Nor does causing MORE environmental damage. If you accept LD114, you need to get a clear picture of the environmental impact of this level of noise and to what extent clam beds will be depleted. You are asking us to pay a big price now, but ultimately what is the cost of excessive airboat noise and airboat use?

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration to the complexities of this matter.

Respectfully submitted:

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see attached file in opposition to this bill