



Maine Municipal
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither for nor Against

LD 114- *An Act To Address Airboat Operation in the State*
and
LD 89-*An Act To Regulate Airboats*

April 12 2021

Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Rebecca Graham and I am testifying neither for nor against of LDs 114 and 89, on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association and at the direction of our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee.

This subject matter was identified as an issue of concern by some of our members who struggle with how to address related airboat use noise complaints. These complaints generally arise when airboats are either poorly maintained or intentionally built to increase their noise during operation, much in the same way as exhaust systems on motor vehicles are modified to exceed normal operational levels. Because airboats operate at a higher decibel level in an unmodified state than quieter water driven counterparts, they are exempt from noise standards imposed on other boats and should not be judged by existing noise levels.

Additionally, this type of watercraft is important to several of our marine harvesters, which are used to provide quick access to areas with no direct public access and historic importance to the industry. The current regulation is ambiguous, and interpretation is left to the discretion of the municipal agent responding to the complaint. It places our marine harvesters and municipal enforcement staff at odds.

Last year, the municipal officials involved in the request for this legislation asked the committee to direct the Department of Inland Fishers and Wildlife to establish an appropriate decibel level for normal operation, so that these boats may be treated proportionally the same as all other boats in the same waters, recognizing the unique need for the noise level to be higher

than other watercraft. To that end, municipal officials ask that you again consider how best to address all of the concerns raised by the stakeholders regarding this legislation and assist the department with taking a lead on a fair and equitable airboat policy.