

Doug Leland
Freeport

Dear Committee Chairs and Members:

The proposed legislation before you has resulted from constructive dialogue intended to address a growing concern along Maine's coast — excessive airboat noise. Unfortunately, the noise levels recommended do little, if anything to address the basic problem, a problem that is not going to go away until adequate remedy and compromise are in place. The recommendations before you do not meet the basic thresholds of remedy or compromise.

Primarily, this issue has arisen as some shellfish harvesters have engaged the use of airboats to improve ease, access and efficiency with harvesting activities. As this is primarily a harvesting issue — at present, consideration should be given to linkage between harvesters, applicable licenses, and municipal shellfish ordinances. In particular, airboat usage should not extend beyond current ordinance limits on harvesting hours, which in Freeport are limited to the period between an hour before sunrise and an hour after sunset. For no reason other than excessive noise, airboat operation should be prohibited at all other times, whether the airboat operator is a harvester or not.

I'm hopeful you can identify a fair and meaningful solution to avoid a growing concern from becoming an annual issue that diverts your attention from other matters of importance to the State. At the end of the day, the issue before you is excessive noise, and currently, the recommendations before you will not solve the problem.

Thank you for your consideration and continued service to the residents of Maine,

Doug Leland
former Chair, Freeport Shellfish Commission