



Town of Harpswell

P.O. Box 39

Harpswell, ME 04079

April 12, 2021

Senator Dill

Representative Landry

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

RE: Town of Harpswell opposes establishing decibel limits in LD 114, An Act to Address Airboat Operation in the State

Dear Senator Dill, Representative Landry and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

The Town of Harpswell is committed to preserving and protecting its coastal marine heritage. For generations, commercial fishermen have been working long hours from before sunrise to after sunset. Many commercial fishermen use a vessel for their harvest. For some shellfish and marine worm harvesters, this vessel may be an airboat.

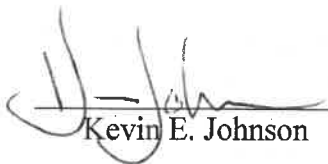
For the last few decades, airboat usage around the Midcoast has been on the rise due to the loss of access to the mud flats. As coastal development continues to flourish, coastal access for marine harvesters to trails and paths that have historically provided access have declined or permissions revoked. With such few options, marine harvesters have turned to a tool that can get them to their worksite on the mudflats.

The Town of Harpswell opposes any section of the proposed bill that puts any decibel limit on airboats until a professional, responsible and timely sound study can be performed that produces reliable data. The Town of Harpswell does, however, support language in LD 114 that continues to convene a workgroup of state and municipal officials, coastal property owners and commercial harvesters to work with the data toward an outcome that does not unreasonably impact marine harvesters.

We urge you not to support LD 114 if the bill contains language establishing decibels limits for airboats.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harpswell Board of Selectmen


Kevin E. Johnson


David I. Chipman


Jane G. Covey