

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee
Marine Resource Committees

Nadia Saliba
95 Lower Flying Point Rd
Freeport, ME 04032

8 April 2021

Dear Committee members:

I am a homeowner in Freeport, writing to express my concerns regarding airboat noise and LD 114 (An Act to Address Airboat Operation in the State). The proposed decibel limits of 90 decibels during daytime hours and 75 decibels during nighttime hours are still considerably louder than those of any other traditional boat operation and would greatly interrupt people's quiet enjoyment of their homes as well as the environment for our important wildlife resources.

I was born in Maine and I grew up in Freeport. I'm familiar with the sounds that come with living by the water, and of motorboats in particular. Airboats and the noise issues associated with them are new and far different. It is only in the last 3 years or so that I have noticed the regular, extremely loud noise from their use.

From my home, the sound of the airboats is akin an airplane operating at high throttle when it is taking off, but one that does not just pass overhead and disappear after a few seconds, but instead goes on often for up to 30 minutes at a time. The noise from the airboats is far louder, and can be heard at a much greater distance, by a far greater number of homeowners, than any other residential noise, such as a lawnmower or leaf blower. Oftentimes, we never even see the airboats at all; even when the noise sounds as they're 50 yards offshore at full-throttle.

Worse, the airboat noise often happens in the early morning (before 6 or 7am) in what would otherwise be a quiet, peaceful time of day. If a neighbor were making that kind of noise at those hours, I would ask them to stop, and to have respect for their neighbors and community by limiting their use to certain frequency and times of day. If they persisted, then I could also turn to local law enforcement for help enforcing our town noise ordinances. I do not see why the rules should be any different just because the person making the loud noise at all hours does it on the water, from further away.

I am fully supportive of the working waterfront and also in supporting small business fishing/shellfish harvesting workers. I do not want to artificially limit their livelihoods. A number of lobster boat operators are based nearby my home. They, too, work early morning hours, but do not create any of the same noise issues.

My understanding is that airboats can operate at lower noise levels either by installing a muffler, or alternatively (and at no additional expense), by limiting the speed at which they travel and the times of day when they operate. I ask only that the airboats be required to operate within the same noise restrictions as anyone else working or recreating in or near a quiet, residential neighborhood, and that they be held accountable for causing a disturbance to people's quiet enjoyment of their

homes as well as to our important wildlife resources (which exist here because of the quiet, rural qualities of the area).

Accordingly, I urge the Commission to adopt lower decibel noise limits with regards to airboats, where they be held to the same accountability standards as anyone else in quiet residential neighborhoods and that the nighttime operation of airboats be also lowered accordingly to respectful enjoyment of sleeping hours.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nadia Saliba', written in a cursive style.

Nadia Saliba