

Statement to Maine Legislative Joint DMR and DIFW Committees' Hearing

Submitted by: Alfred Voskian, Freeport, Maine

I am a resident of Freeport and live about 1 mile from the Harraseeket River (Freeport harbor). The airboats operating from Winslow Park to harvest in the Harraseeket are VERY evident from my house, despite the distance, but during the daytime, within acceptable levels. On the water in the harbor, an operating airboat will interrupt conversations and require ending telephone calls until the airboat is either up-river or powers down at Winslow Park. I have no interest in stopping commercial clamming in the river, nor any other commercial workboats, but neither do I believe that the profit motives of a very few people should supersede the rest of the community.

The legislature carved out airboats from the noise limits which apply to all other watercraft- assumedly to recognize that airboats are uniquely loud. It seems exceptional that if a regulation limiting a public disturbance is long in place, when a new, higher level source of public disturbance is recognized, it is removed from the long standing regulation with the apparent intention to allow this new source to create a higher level of public disturbance than any other source. Is this a precedent that the legislature will follow in the future?

The temporary daytime noise limits proposed in LD 114, which I oppose, are higher than all of the noise readings taken by DMR in July 2020¹ and the Consensus Group demonstration in February 2021². In contrast, the more tolerable daytime noise limits proposed in LD 89, which I do support, are still above all but two shoreline readings taken by DMR in those two tests. I do not see why the higher noise limits in LD 114 should be allowed. The lower limits in LD 89 seem to have very limited impact on daytime shellfish harvesting using airboats, while minimizing the public disturbance.

I strongly support passage of LD 89, in preference to LD 114, while the proposed studies by the Stakeholder Group as proposed in LD 89, provide further information for the legislature's consideration in making permanent regulation.

¹ Airboat Report Back to Legislature 2021, Appendix E, p. 5 "Practical Test"

² Airboat Report Back to Legislature 2021, Appendix B