

Alan Weiner
Freeport

DIFW Meeting Testimony 4/12/21 RE: LD114

Dear Committee Members,

We are writing in reference to LD 114 - An Act to Address Airboat Operations in the State. First, we would like to thank the committee for addressing this issue on behalf of all concerned citizens

We have lived at the water's edge on the west shore of Wolf Neck peninsula in Freeport for the past 50 years. Until 3 years ago, it was a tranquil and peaceful oasis. That's when airboat noise began to disturb the peace, interrupt the sleep of our family and guests (as early as 3AM) and alter the balance of wildlife and the environment. Fewer sightings of eagles, osprey, seals & herons are a notable change.

Currently, only two airboats use the Harraseeket River. As this number may increase, it is imperative that a reasonable compromise be established. One that balances the need for commercial clam harvesters to access the mud flats with the right of coastal landowners and wildlife to not be accosted by offensive, disruptive and unhealthful noise. Peaceful coexistence is the goal. Precedent for government regulation of excessive noise is established fact. The town of Freeport has a reasonable land based noise ordinance and the DIFW has already established reasonable noise levels for watercraft. It is unreasonable to allow airboats to exceed those already established noise limits because of the unique design of their propulsion system.

We are also concerned about the future proliferation of airboat noise on all waterways throughout the state if their use is allowed for recreation and tourism.

The demonstration test performed from the deck of my home on February 8, 2021 by Wdn. Herring proved that airboats can perform at levels below 83dB(A) at a distance of 750 feet from shore. Significantly restricting boat speed and reducing prop pitch are just two ways to achieve this goal (as suggested by Sgt Mike Joy, IFW).

The daytime level of 90dB(A) proposed in LD 114 does not go far enough to mitigate the offensive noise. Nor is the proposed nighttime level of 75dB(A) comparable with sleep. Also, any proposed monitoring system should address the noise levels actually experienced at the shoreline while the boats are underway.

We agree that any airboats used by government entities for emergency or official use should be exempted from established noise restrictions.

We implore the committee members to take a more stringent approach to establishing reasonable noise limits and operating rules for airboats and a definitive way of measuring & enforcing noise levels as experienced at the shoreline. We believe the levels should not exceed well established land-based noise ordinances or those applicable to other traditional types of watercraft.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alan Weiner & Susan Lamb
100 Weiners Way
Freeport, ME 04032