

To: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

RE: LD 1663, An Act To Improve Boating Safety on Maine Waters

Dear Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Dixon, and I live on Taylor Pond in Auburn. Recently, it came to my attention that there are concerns about this bill, so I reviewed the video of the hearing on the 14<sup>th</sup> to understand the issues.

Here's what I came away with:

- 1) This is a good bill for Maine, because it promotes boater safety, habitat and water quality protection, and property value preservation. Maine should join the other 45 states which have a strong boater safety bill on inland waters.
- 2) In retrospect, the Committee wishes it had requested stakeholder's input to address questions such as who gets grand-parented with regard to the water safety training, how much training should be required of operators over age 55, and should the rules be extended to marine waters. These are all good questions, and of course, hindsight is always 20-20, but the fact is that, on its merits, the bill has already received an OTP-AM vote. My hope is that the Committee will find a way to go forward with the bill, maybe with additional amendments that include the requirement to study these issues. I hope that the Committee does not undo its good work by rescinding its OTP vote, and allowing the bill to die, so that it must be taken up anew in the 131<sup>st</sup> legislature.
- 3) At age 74, I am in the over 55 group, but I am computer savvy, have high speed internet, and now feel inspired to take the training. Paying for training out of pocket might be a hardship for some retirees, and I hope that issue might be addressed. Since the training is set up in modules, only the most relevant modules for this age group might be stressed, thereby customizing the training, and cutting costs.
- 4) Each lake may have its own particular needs, which may allow for a different type of customized training. For example, on Taylor Pond, the only rule I see being broken is traveling too fast too close to shore, which creates erosion, particularly on ponds with steep banks. Also, destination lakes, such as Sebago, may want to stress ensuring that invasive plants are not introduced. Customizing training may be assisted if the Department works with local lake associations.

Sincerely,  
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