



15 University Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330
207-623-9511

January 31, 2024

Honorable David LaFountain, Senate Chair
Honorable Scott Landry, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-100

Re: *Letter of Support for LD 2141 An Act to Enhance Protections for and Better Address Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State*

Dear Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

The Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) is pleased to support LD 2141 An Act to Enhance Protections for and Better Address Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State.

About MWUA. The Maine Water Utilities Association is a nonprofit association based in Augusta that provides support for water works professionals throughout the State of Maine in advocating for safe drinking water through educational and technical programming as well as advocacy on the local, state, and national level. The Association was formed in 1925 and counts approximately 109 water utilities in Maine as members.

Discussion. Many Maine water utilities use surface water as the primary source of drinking water supply. Maintaining a high-quality source water supply is the first line of defense in protecting public health and keeping treatment costs manageable. Invasive aquatic plants represent a significant risk to water quality and aquatic life in Maine's lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams.

Prevention of infestation is ideal, as it is much more difficult to remediate after invasive species have been established. Infestations of an invasive aquatic species can change the ecosystems of water bodies and impact the ability to treat the source water for a drinking water supply. To combat the spread of invasive species, many water utilities that use surface water partner with lake associations and other stakeholders to provide courtesy boat inspection services at boat launches.

The legislative authority and direction provided in LD 2141 will enhance the existing tools used to reduce the spread of invasive species throughout Maine. This legislation provides \$2,000,000 to the Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species Fund to address the most serious aquatic plant infestations and it directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) to strengthen watercraft inspection protocols and review policies and procedures for surface use regulations.

Conclusion. MWUA has long supported public policies that help protect sources of drinking water. This legislation would provide additional protections to reduce the risk of aquatic invasive species entering a water body. Therefore, MWUA strongly encourages the Committee to vote LD 2141 Ought to Pass.

Yours for safe drinking water,

Roger Crouse
Chair, MWUA Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee

cc: James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative Counsel
Nicki Pellenz, Executive Director, MWUA