

Robert McLaughlin
Lake Wesserrunnett Association, Madison, Maine
LD 2141

January 31, 2024

Dear Chair LaFountain, Chair Landry, and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee:

I am a member of LWA, and an active volunteer multiple committee member practicing stewardship in support of Lake Wesserrunnett and all of the more than 6000 Maine lakes.

Below, I am joining my fellow LWA members in submitting our Association's testimony in support of LD 2141.

However, in addition, as a lake shorefront property owner, I am including this paragraph testifying in favor of this bill specifically in support of our partners, every other land owner and resident of the Lake Wesserrunnett watershed, which rests totally in the municipality of Madison, ME. Who are not lakeshore owners, and who are too often not recognized for their activity in support of Wesserrunnett lake water quality, even though they do not enjoy the benefits from lakeshore ownership that we do.

So I write in support of our partnership, all of us who live in this watershed. As a shoreline owner, I am proud of our partnership in return, when we annually provide on third or more of the tax base of Madison, in support of schools and all other municipal services.

LD 2141's support for MAINE lake safety, supports every member of every species in our watershed.

And so that is why I join our entire membership of Lake Wesserrunnett Association (LWA) to testify that our membership fully support LD 2141, a bill to fund critical work to reduce the spread of invasive aquatic species (IAS).

This bill, which provides much needed funding to fight infestations and asks officials to reassess and strengthen IAS management protocols, benefits the millions of people who love Maine lakes, as well as the fish and wildlife who make lakes their home.

We believe it will benefit LWA because the extra funding will lead to better management of current infestations. Strengthening current inspect protocols and surface restrictions will reduce the likelihood that boaters will transport IAS from lake to lake.

LWA has been committed to preventing IAS since the inception of the State's Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program in 2002. Having funded and run a part-time CBI program on Lake Wesserrunnett since the program's inception, we at LWA are well aware of how devastating an IAS infestation would be to our lake, its wildlife, and our surrounding community, with far-reaching impacts to habitat, economic values, and tourism.

While the 20+ year state-run CBI program has slowed the spread of invasive aquatic plants, new infestations continue to occur in lakes, rivers, and streams throughout the state. These infestations, several of which are now within a five- to ten-mile radius of Lake Wesserrunnett, significantly increase the chance that Lake Wesserrunnett will also become infested. Given the proximity of these IAS infestations to our lake, we are concerned that our part-time program is increasingly inadequate to the task of prevention. There are just too many holes in the dyke.

As infestations increase in number and severity, the cost of managing them and reducing their spread also increases. The State needs to do more to support the many non-profits and volunteers working hard to protect our lakes.

LWA supports the \$2,000,000 appropriations to address series infestations in the

State. Of equal importance are the mandates to review and strengthen existing watercraft inspection protocols, as well as surface use restrictions.

We urge you to support LD 2141 to protect the future health of Maine's lakes. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lake Wesserunsett Association
Madison, Maine
Lake Wesserunsett