



February 11, 2025

Re: Support for LD 171: " An Act to Enhance Protections Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State"

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

My name is Colin Holme and I am the Director of the Lakes Environmental Association. Our organization is headquartered in Bridgton and we directly work on waterbodies in the upper Sebago and Saco River watersheds. We have one of the largest milfoil control programs in the state and hire, train, and oversee around 35 Courtesy Boat Inspectors each year.

The lakes of Maine are gems in the State for our residents and visitors alike. They improve the quality of life of people living and visiting Maine and are year-round revenue generators for our economy.

We have a lot to lose as these lakes and ponds succumb to invasive species. If you haven't been to a waterbody like Lake Arrowhead or Sebago Cove, I encourage you to go and see what a lake infested with variable leaf milfoil looks like. This is not the future we all want. But this is what it will be unless we start to look at different strategies to stop these species from spreading.

This bill directs the MDEP and MIFW to review stricter standards for watercraft inspections on lakes with invasive aquatic species, and asks both agencies to review surface use restriction policies.

Right now, invasive species like milfoil are moving out of infested lakes within our state attached to boat trailers and propellers. These species are also moving around rapidly within infested waterbodies because of loop holes in existing regulations.

In Sebago Cove, there is a commercial water ski course set up in a shallow area heavily infested with variable leaf milfoil. There is no permitting for this course and no regulations that prohibit or limit a course from being placed in an infested area. The course is set up by an individual that does not own property on Sebago Cove. Instead, he lives on Sebago Lake and brings his clients into the smaller cove to ski there when it is windy in larger Sebago Lake. The ski boat chops up milfoil all season long, which is spread by fragmentation, and causes new infestations throughout Sebago Cove and in downstream Sebago Lake.



This bill provides an opportunity to address this issue as well as other possible solutions like requiring mandatory inspections by Courtesy Boat Inspectors already on duty (it is a voluntary inspection now) or requiring a boater who is leaving an infested waterbody to self-inspect. These solutions are within our reach and should be implemented before more lakes succumb to invasive species.

Please vote “ought to pass” on LD 171.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.



Colin Holme
Executive Director
Lakes Environmental Association