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4/16/25

To: IF&W Committee  
From Steven Pineo

My name is Steven Pineo. I am a camp owner at Bog Lake in Northfield, Maine.

Today I am writing to testify for approval of LD 1448, an act to Provide Winter Access to the Bog Lake Public Launch in Northfield, Maine. It is with great disappointment that we have to ask IF & W to provide fair and equitable access to the public landing at Bog Lake. The issue we have is the gate to the landing being closed and locked restricting access during the Winter months. The gate is closed and locked at some point around December 1<sup>st</sup> and does not get opened back up until after "Mud Season" sometime around April 1<sup>st</sup>. The concerned camp owners around the lake cannot understand why this gate cannot be opened during the winter months once the road is frozen.

Bog Lake is a very popular lake for ice fishing and Winter activities. In fact, the camp owners around the lake now put on an ice fishing derby every winter, when ice conditions allow, to benefit different schools around the county. It is a very popular event! This year we had 3 local grade schools attend and send buses to get the kids to the lake. The issue is getting buses close enough to the lake to make it easy for kids and parents to attend. Use of the "Public" landing would fix this issue.

The last two winters we have contacted Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to ask if we could get the gate opened for the Winter. We also have asked if we could simply get it opened for just our events. The local office has tried to help make this happen for us but the answer from Augusta has been "absolutely not"!

When this landing was proposed to the town in 2016 it was presented to the concerned citizens as being needed for fair and equitable access to the lake. This statement comes directly from the department's fish stocking program policy. The first few Winters the gate was open. It has only been the last two winters that the department has decided to restrict access and has gone directly against their own policy. They need to be forced to hold up to their end of the agreement! There are landings all over our state that are open for the winter months. Why is Bog Lake any different?

Unfortunately, common sense and a simple phone calls have not worked to fix this issue. Today, I am requesting you require the department to follow their own policy and allow fair and equitable access to the Bog Lake Landing from January 1<sup>st</sup> ~ March 15<sup>th</sup>

Steven M. Pineo, Concerned citizen of Bog Lake