



30 Mile River Watershed Association  
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RE: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **LD 2101: An Act to Strengthen Shoreland Zoning Enforcement**  
February 6, 2024

Dear Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Whitney Baker and I am the program Director of the 30 Mile River Watershed Association (30 Mile). This watershed encompasses over 20 waterbodies in rural Central Maine. We are a coalition of seven towns, nine lake associations and two conservation organizations. Our mission is to work as a community for clean and healthy lakes, ponds and streams in our watershed.

30 Mile fully supports LD 2101, ***An Act to Strengthen Shoreland Zoning Enforcement***. This act is a much-needed step toward holding shoreland violators accountable and ensuring proper enforcement of the existing law - a task that is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for our local CEOs given the current systems in place. Especially in our small towns with little staff and resources where the threat of expensive litigation is a concern.

Much of 30 Mile's work involves educating shorefront landowners about our fragile water resources, shoreland habitats, and the rules and regulations already in place to protect them. One of the best education tools we have is being able to reference Maine's strong shoreland zoning law. In most cases, Maine's shoreland zoning law is having a very positive impact on our lakes, but to prevent violations like those that occurred in Raymond on Sebago Lake, the law needs to be better enforced. To achieve that, our towns need to be empowered.

When the law is blatantly ignored, the damages go far beyond the impacts to the land and water. When property owners observe their neighbors breaking the law, without any repercussions, it erodes the authority of the law. It degrades public respect for regulations and rules in general. And it makes the work of organizations like mine even harder.

Other important services that 30 Mile provides are technical assistance and financial assistance through grants, which both enable private and public landowners to address erosion and runoff issues on shorefront properties. Unfortunately, too often we are using these resources to merely correct past shoreland zoning violations that should have never happened in the first place.

Beyond this, the stakes are much higher now as we are combatting the very real impacts of a changing climate. Twice in one year, properties and infrastructure in our watershed suffered

significant damage after storms delivered more than 5" of rain in less than 24 hours to the region. The damage poses a serious threat to the water quality of our lakes, ponds, and streams. Many of our watershed communities must now focus to repair damages and make progress toward more resilient infrastructure and development. With such serious problems, we need shoreland zoning enforcement to be strong universally, and this act is a step in the right direction.

We now have an opportunity to empower our communities, and the local CEOs doing this important work, to stand up to shoreland violators, hold them accountable, and reverse the ethic of law-breaking behavior that has taken hold on many shorefronts throughout our state. I urge you to vote **OUGHT TO PASS** on LD 2101.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Whitney Baker". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Whitney Baker, Program Director  
30 Mile River Watershed Association