



February 5th, 2024

Re: Support for LD 2101: "An Act to Strengthen Shoreland Zoning Enforcement"

Dear Senator Tim Nangle, Representative Holly Stover, and the distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Lauren Pickford and I am the Planning and Land Use Manager for the Lakes Environmental Association (LEA), which serves the Lake Region of Western Maine and all of Maine's lakes through the Maine Lake Science Center.

Shoreland zoning laws are one of the most crucial tools in protecting Maine's lakes and ponds, and the economies they support. Excessive shoreline development creates pollution and harms water quality, recreation, wildlife, and even drinking water sources.

LD 2101 is important legislation that empowers municipalities to enforce Shoreland Zoning throughout the state. Most shoreland zoning violations are caused by negligence and corrected via small penalties or simply by goodwill. However, some wealthy landowners have the ability to ignore these laws by out-litigating the municipality. Towns need the tools from LD 2101 to enforce their zoning laws against these acts of defiance.

For individuals or businesses with more resources than the municipality, shoreland zoning violations may never be resolved. This is because the financial cost of years of expensive litigation born by the town to restore these properties is beyond the municipality's financial capability. In addition, the monetary gain in value of a highly developed property on the shoreline may be more than the enforceable penalties for shoreland zoning violations.

Towns around the state are struggling to fight violators without the resources to take them on in the courts. This legislation gives towns the power to revoke or deny permits, as well as put a lien on a property where a shoreland zoning violation has occurred to recoup litigation costs.

This legislation is a needed step to ensure wealthy land and business owners can't continue to abuse a system designed to keep Maine's water pristine for generations to come. LD 2101 will send a powerful message about the significance of safeguarding Maine's natural resources for all.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I encourage you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2101.

Lauren Pickford

Planning and Land Use Manager
Lakes Environmental Association