



CHANDLER WOODCOCK  
COMMISSIONER



PATRICIA AHO  
COMMISSIONER

## MEMORANDUM

Date: January 14, 2014

To: Senator David E. Dutremble, Chair  
Representative Michael A. Shaw, Chair  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

From: Chandler Woodcock, Commissioner, Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife  
Patricia Aho, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

Subj: Opposition letter regarding L.D. 1626, in lieu of testimony.

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Dear Committee Members,

This will serve as a joint letter, in lieu of testimony, from the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and the Department of Environmental Protection to express our concern and opposition to LD 1626.

LD 1626 increases the fees for watercraft operating on the inland waters of Maine. The increased revenue would be utilized by DEP to remove invasive aquatic plants from lakes in Maine that exceed 10,000 acres and would direct DEP to establish a long-term management program to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plants.

DIFW is the agency responsible for registering all watercraft in Maine, which includes the lake and river protection stickers. While both agencies understand the need to protect Maine's lakes and ponds against invasive aquatic plants, there are several reasons that DIFW and DEP would not support this bill.


1. The 2014 boat registration process has already begun and having this pass as emergency legislation would create significant logistical issues for license agents and DIFW staff.
2. Currently both residents and non-residents registering their boat in Maine pay \$10 for the invasive species portion of the watercraft registration. This bill would require non-residents who register their boat in Maine to pay more than Maine residents for the invasive species portion of boat registration. This adds an additional layer to the boat registration process for both the license agents as well as the boat registrants because it would require proof of residency when registering a boat. It would also add additional complexity for DIFW in administering the boat registration process.

DEP is the agency responsible for managing the Invasive Aquatic Species Program and implements a number of programs aimed at preventing invasive aquatic species in the State. These programs include: DEP's Invasive Aquatic Species Program (IASP) administration of grants for aquatic plant removal, a courtesy boat inspection program, contracting with the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) to provide Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) workshops to train volunteers to survey their lakes for invasive aquatic plants, and collaboration, both with neighboring states that have more extensive invasive plant problems and with Maine stakeholders, to set priorities and find efficiencies. These efforts are in addition to the many water quality control programs for Maine's lakes that Maine DEP administers.


3. The long-term management suggested in this bill seems redundant with current practices in DEP's management program. Part of DEP's current long-term management of invasive aquatic plants is a coordinated effort with the Maine Milfoil Initiative and the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program to develop the *Citizen's Guide to Best Practices for Management of Invasive Aquatic Plants*, expected to be available to the public in 2014. The bill's long term management plan is also restricted to the largest lakes in the state but there are many more bodies of water of all sizes to protect and restore. Furthermore, work on smaller lakes that are infested will benefit the larger lakes by reducing the risk of invasive aquatic plant spread.
4. DEP's current program already considers much of what is proposed within this bill. DEP's Invasive Aquatic Species Program collaborates with lake associations to address invasive aquatic plant prevention, early detection and control. Local interest and effort is critical for a successful invasive aquatic plant program.
5. With respect to coordinating forums to facilitate creation of lake associations, past experience suggests that successful efforts on any lake-related issue require local interest/effort. State government can certainly play a role in information-sharing between interested residents and groups in providing technical assistance, but development of a lakewide association takes concerted effort by all parties over an extended period of time.

If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact Christl Theriault, Assistant to the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife at 287-1197.

Sincerely,



Chandler Woodcock, Commissioner of the  
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife



Patricia Aho, Commissioner of the  
Maine Department of Environmental Protection