

Themes for Compelling Testimony for LD 2141: At recent advocacy trainings hosted by the LPC, participants discussed how to craft testimony to convince legislators that lakes need the kind of funding provided by LD 2141. These themes emerged:

- Mainers like to spend wisely. It is less expensive to keep lakes healthy than to remediate a lake with water quality declines.
- Increasing the resiliency of lakes today - with projects that reduce erosion and runoff - is an investment against threats from climate change (warmer waters, bigger storms, etc.)
- Extreme weather events (e.g., droughts, heavy storms) exacerbate water quality issues (algae, metaphyton, cyanobacteria) and are expected to continue to impact our lakes.
- Lakes are valued at more than \$14 billion annually. Clean, clear water is a major driver of our recreation and outdoor economies— benefiting anglers, marinas, and many others.
- Lake properties contribute disproportionately to municipal budgets. Declines in water quality put that revenue at risk.
- Lakes belong to, and benefit, all the people of Maine. Communities with fewer resources are unable to raise funds to protect lakes that belong to all.
- Community groups and lake associations raise millions in private funds to protect public resources. This level of fundraising is not sustainable in the face of growing challenges to lake health.
- Federal funding that supports clean lakes in Maine is in jeopardy and may disappear.
- Funding will come from unredeemed bottle deposits, so there is no cost to Mainers
- Many communities have completed watershed surveys to identify sources of pollution, but need funding to implement remediation projects.
- LD 2141 can leverage private funding by providing matching grants, thereby encouraging more collaboration between the state and the private sector.
- The Maine DEP works hard to protect lakes and support lake groups, but they are underfunded and understaffed. This funding could create one or more positions at the agency to support lake protection work.
- The capacity to enforce existing shoreline zoning restrictions that protect water quality is severely limited and needs to be addressed; more staff and more funding are needed.
- Many septic systems around lakes are reaching the end of their lives; funding to help repair and replace septics would be incredibly timely.

Ideas for Testimony Content:

- Look for the hook in the story you share – money, children, family, grandchildren, loons, boating, swimming, etc. Share an experience or passion.
- Share concrete examples of how lake funding could be used: Implementation of Best Management Practices (often a result of a LakeSmart evaluation); culvert and stream crossing improvements, etc. Note that funds cannot be used for invasive species work.
- Insert a picture into written testimony, or bring one to pass to committee members. Pictures can convey messages about lake health that words often cannot.
- Share your own story – what is your relationship and role in the community? What have you seen or what has changed, and how does that impact you?
- Share successes and positive impact – highlight what you've done for your lake with limited funding, and ask the committee to imagine what could be done with more.

Excerpts from Sample Testimony for Past Lake Funding Bills:

But working as volunteers, the job of protecting our lakes has become bigger than what we can handle in today's world. And this is BEFORE our lake is infested or BEFORE we have an algae bloom, which is **no longer a matter of if - but when**. Fund raising, grant writing, managing budgets, payroll, and contracts go beyond our scope. **This is not sustainable.**

As a high school student, I spent summers teaching swimming lessons in pristine Clearwater Lake in Industry and canoeing at the YMCA Camp on Lake Cobbossee. As a college student, I enjoyed camping, swimming and canoeing on lakes and rivers across the state of Maine. As an adult I have volunteered for over a decade as a certified Invasive Plan Patrol surveyor and volunteer team leader collecting data for Wilson, Dexter, Berry and Parker Ponds. I have volunteered as a Courtesy Boat Inspector and have participated in the Lake Smart program.

Excerpts from Sample Testimony for Past Lake Funding Bills (cont'd):

The state funding Toddy Pond Association receives for its Boat Inspection Program, which is the maximum amount of \$2,000, covers less than 20% of its direct costs to run the program. **Boat use has increased substantially over just the past few years.** Today, Toddy inspects over 50 boats on a busy day. While the boat ramp is state built and state owned, the responsibility of implementing the Boat Inspection Program is up to property lake owners.

Healthy lakes are critical to the survival of industries that set Maine apart and lift up our economy, including Maine's iconic camping industry, which contributes over \$500 million to our economy annually, and the outdoor recreation industry, which contributed \$3 billion to our economy in 2019 alone.

Through more than four generations members of my family have enjoyed the beauty and other benefits of Androscoggin Lake in Wayne. Our much-used seasonal cottage is a place of great significance to us. In addition, we have been and remain invested in the Town of Wayne and in central Maine generally, where our family and community connections are both numerous and deep.

Dear Committee Members,
I own a home on Abrams Pond in Eastbrook and have been a volunteer water quality monitor for the past 5 years and am the VP of the Abrams Pond Association. I have noticed that our algae blooms have been getting progressively worse and we may be on the verge of requiring an alum treatment. Our pond association has been working hard to prevent run-off of phosphorus into our lake and has received grants to help fix camp roads and improve many things that contribute to the water quality. We will be needing the help that this bill could provide to help us to keep the lake water quality as high as possible for the people who enjoy it and the wildlife that depend on it. Please support this bill for the future of Maine's beautiful lakes!
Thank you!

Like so many lakes in Maine, almost all of the buildable land around Pushaw Lake has seasonal camps or year-round homes on it. Each property has a septic system which represents possible source of nutrient flow into the lake with the potential for increased algae growth. Almost every site has a dock which can mean foot and vehicle traffic on paths that bring more nutrients into the lake. These are only two examples of the stresses development creates.