

Support LD 184: An Act to Minimize the Propagation of Invasive Aquatic Plants

Summary: Requires boats and other equipment leaving a water body be drained prior to transport

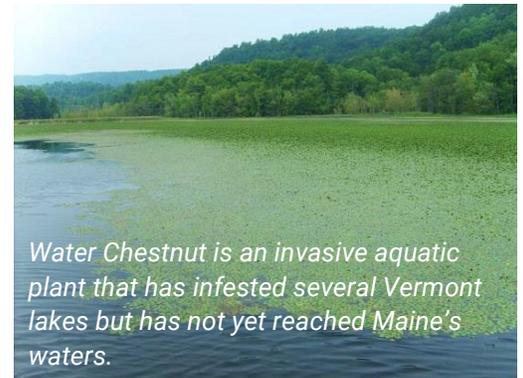
Public Hearing: Feb. 10 at 9 a.m., Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

Invasive plants harm recreational opportunities, water quality, wildlife habitat and local economies.

- Invasive aquatic plants are usually introduced into lakes and ponds when they hitchhike on boats and their associated equipment.
- Once introduced, invasive species grow and spread rapidly, outcompeting native plants, degrading habitat for fish and other wildlife, and in some cases decreasing property values.
- An aquatic invasive plant, Eurasian watermilfoil (present in 3 Maine lakes), reduced Vermont lakefront property values up to 16% and Wisconsin lakefront property values by 13% (Zhang and Boyle, 2010).

Maine has limited capacity to fight additional invasive species infestations.

- As of January 2020, more than 30 Maine lakes and rivers are infested with 6 different invasive species.
- Maine's nonprofits and lake associations bear the brunt of invasive species management and removal work. Courtesy Boat Inspection efforts are at or beyond capacity throughout the state.
- Funding from the Department of Environmental Protection supports much of these efforts but even with recent increased revenue through the Lake and River Protection Sticker, there is not enough funding to support existing prevention and control needs.
- Additional infestations pose major challenges to existing management strategies and organizational/agency capacities.



Maine has yet to deal with some of the worst aquatic invaders.

- Maine is surrounded by states with more severe invasive infestations of more and different invasive aquatic species, putting Maine's lakes at great risk for additional infestations as boats move across state lines and between water bodies.
- Draining water from motors, live wells, and bilges is a recommended practice for reducing the spread of devastating animal aquatic invaders from nearby states, including Spiny Water Flea and several species of invasive mussels that can travel in microscopic larval forms.

Maine's laws need to be stronger to reduce the risk of spread.

- While existing Maine law prohibits the transport of aquatic plants, we lag neighboring states in requiring the simple, easy, quick step of draining boats before overland transport.
- New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York (along with 12 other states) require that drain plugs be removed from boats before transport.

Complying with a new law requiring the draining of boats before transport is quick, easy, and costs nothing other than a few minutes of boaters' time. This small investment will make a big difference in reducing risks to Maine's lakes from aquatic invaders.



Additional Resources and Information for Invasive Species:

Maine Department of Environmental Protection: www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives

Maine Natural Areas Program: www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/invasives.htm

Lakes Environmental Association: mainelakes.org/invasives

Maine Lakes: www.lakes.me/invasives

Friends of the Cobboosee Watershed: watershedfriends.com/programs/mil-foiler/invasive-aquatic-plants/

30 Mile River Watershed Association: 30mileriver.org/programs/invasive-plant-patrol/

You can help pass this important bill!

Committees need to hear from you! Because of the COVID pandemic, all public hearings in 2021 are remote. Testimony can be submitted online prior to the hearing date or delivered in person via Zoom (see instructions below). Telling a personal story about your experience with invasive species or the reason that you feel passionately about this issue will be the most compelling way to engage committee members. The committee will get facts and statistics from organizations and agencies. Focus instead on a personal story that connects you to the harm that comes to Maine's lakes and ponds from the spread of invasive plants. The same advice applies to written testimony. For tips on writing compelling testimony, visit www.lakes.me/take-action#Testify

To either speak at the hearing or submit written testimony: Visit www.legislature.maine.gov, and click on the "Testimony Submission" button (bottom, right). At the next screen select the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, then the date (Feb 10). Check the box for LD 184. Then:

- **To submit written testimony**, upload your document (Word or PDF). You can also type text directly into the submission box. Below that, add your full name, town or organization in Maine (either full time or part time/seasonal residence), email and phone.
- **To speak at the public hearing**, fill out the contact information as above but also click the box that says "I would like to present my testimony live". You'll then see an added box to indicate if you support, oppose or are neutral on the bill. Although written testimony is not required, feel free to upload testimony at this time if you'd like the committee to have a written record of your comments.

To listen to or watch public hearings, visit www.legislature.maine.gov and click on the links at the top center of the page.

For updates, including changes in bill status, newly printed lake bills coming before the legislature, and other lake advocacy news and legislative alerts, please visit lakes.me/advocacy.

***Your voice makes a big difference.
Thank you for speaking up on behalf of Maine's lakes!***