

November 2017

Maine Lakes Society

Dear Senator Collins and Senator King:

We, the lake conservation organizations of Maine, are concerned that pending cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency budget and the repeal of the Clean Water Rule (WOTUS) will irreparably damage Maine's water resources. We urge you to ensure these vital protections for the integrity, health and benefits of Maine waters remain secure in FY18 and beyond.

Maine lakes are a special case in point since they are uniquely susceptible to impairment as well as challenging and costly to restore. These high value assets generate over \$3.5B in economic activity, fuel 52,000 jobs, power local economies and property tax bases, and provide drinking water to 1/3 of our citizens each year. Currently, 53 of our 2,314 great ponds are impaired and bloom annually, more than 490 are 'at risk from development,' and 172 are High Priority Lake Watersheds (MEDEP). *The only public funds available in Maine to prevent lake degradation and restore impaired lakes come from EPA's Clean Water Act Nonpoint Source (319) Funds.* Since 2008, seven lakes and one stream have been brought back from impairment by the 319 Program. Last year alone, fifteen 319 projects kept 500 tons of sediment, 550 pounds of phosphorus and 1,000 pounds of nitrogen out of Maine lakes and streams. Federal grants require in-state match, doubling their impact: \$1,830,000 in 2015.

The Clean Water Rule (WOTUS) protects headwater streams and wetlands. Its repeal threatens all receiving waters. The larger streams, lakes, rivers, estuaries, and marine waters we need for transport, recreation, drinking water, and food rest upon the integrity of these headwaters, as does the fate of the Eastern brook trout. Wetlands, which control floods, sequester nutrients and pollution, and furnish travel ways and habitat for wildlife, yield a \$500,000 annual value to US citizens. The science is irrefutable on these issues.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns. As you legislate the future of Senator Muskie's legacy CWA and FY18 funding, we enjoin you to find a bipartisan path that protects Maine's inestimably valuable waters. We hope we may count on your good offices, and we look forward to working with you.

With respect and best wishes,

Peter Kallin, PhD
President

Maggie Shannon
Executive Director

"The people of Maine should keep in mind that they are the actual owners of the lakes of Maine and of the water contained in them. These lakes and this water is public property of inestimable value."

Percival P. Baxter, 53rd Governor of Maine, 1923