

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 171

H.P. 104

House of Representatives, January 14, 2025

An Act to Enhance Protections Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State

Reference to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative HASENFUS of Readfield.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and
Representative: BRIDGEO of Augusta, Senator: BENNETT of Oxford.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 434, Pt. A, §7, is
3 amended to read:

4 **1. Program.** The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and
5 Wildlife jointly shall implement a program to inspect watercraft, watercraft trailers and
6 outboard motors at or near the border of the State and at boat launching sites for the
7 presence of invasive aquatic plants; to monitor inland waters of the State known to be
8 infested with invasive aquatic plants; and to provide educational materials to the public and
9 to watercraft owners regarding invasive aquatic plants and surface use restrictions on inland
10 waters of the State pursuant to section 1864.

11 **Sec. 2. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 434, Pt. A, §7, is
12 amended by amending the first blocked paragraph to read:

13 The program in 2002 and subsequent years must be at a level of effort determined by the
14 commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in consultation with
15 the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic ~~Plant~~ Plants and Nuisance Species, as
16 established in section 1871. The program must include a review of watercraft inspection
17 protocols and surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State known to be infested
18 with invasive aquatic plants pursuant to section 1864.

19 **Sec. 3. Study of watercraft inspection protocols and surface use restrictions**
20 **on inland waters of the State known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants;**
21 **review of protocols and restrictions.** The Commissioner of Environmental Protection
22 and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife jointly shall review watercraft
23 inspection protocols and surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State known to be
24 infested with invasive aquatic plants pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38,
25 section 1862, subsection 1 and make recommendations related to how these protocols and
26 restrictions could be strengthened. The commissioners jointly shall also evaluate how
27 information about restrictions is communicated to members of the public. By January 1,
28 2026, the commissioners shall submit a report, including any suggested legislation, to the
29 Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on their findings and
30 recommendations with respect to watercraft inspection protocols and surface use
31 restrictions on inland waters of the State known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants
32 and how information on restrictions is communicated to members of the public. The
33 committee may report out legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of
34 the 132nd Legislature.

35 **SUMMARY**

36 This bill requires the Commissioner of Environmental Protection and the
37 Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to jointly review and recommend more
38 stringent watercraft inspection protocols on inland waters of the State known to be infested
39 with invasive aquatic plants and to review surface use restrictions and notification of those
40 restrictions to members of the public.