

Highland Lake has been recognized by the Maine DEP as a lake “most at risk of new development” and has shown an alarming trend of increasing phosphorus, the controlling nutrient in the lake ecosystem. Additionally, Highland lake has had a picocyanobacteria bloom for the past four summers. Highland is the only lake in Maine known to have this phenomenon, where you cannot see your feet if standing in waist deep water.

The concerns are that adding more phosphorus to the lake with high density housing could push the lake over the tipping point, making it very difficult to recover if even possible.

Highland Lake is already highly developed needs protective ordinance.

Lake water quality has a large impact on property taxes. Both Sabattus Pond and China Lake saw property values drop 30% when the lake water quality plummeted.

That would mean a \$1.5 million in lost taxes to the Towns

Two high density housing projects are asking to build 51 additional houses within the watershed, further straining the lake’s ability to recover.

Windham is already helping fund the investigation into the cause of the picocyanobacteria providing \$4,000 to help find the cause.

This referendum proposes to establish all property within the Highland Lake Watershed as Farm and Residential Zoning without Cluster Housing, Manufactured Home Park Overlay zones or funnel development (eg: three or more houses sharing a 25 foot right of way to the lake). This change would limit individual lot sizes to the Farm and Residential Zone minimum size of 50,000 square feet and require at least 25 feet of lake frontage per house for new subdivisions that provide lake access.

The Town shall establish the maximum Phosphorus budget levels for subdivisions to be no greater than 0.018 lbs/acre/year

The minimum setback for new subsurface sewage disposal systems shall be no closer than one hundred (100) feet, horizontal distance from the normal high-water line of a water body or the upland edge of a wetland.