



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
BOARD OF PESTICIDES CONTROL
28 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

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GOVERNOR

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COMMISSIONER

Memorandum

To: Board of Pesticides Control

From: Julia Vacchiano, Pesticide Registrar and Water Quality Specialist

RE: Water Quality Proposal for the Summer of 2025

April 17, 2025

Invasive plant species pose a significant and escalating threat to Maine's ecological health and economic vitality. Maine faces substantial pressure from aggressive invasive plant species, leading to habitat degradation and biodiversity loss. Licensed pesticide applicators diligently manage these species near waterways, adhering to best practices for herbicide application, they have expressed interest in data to confirm they are doing so effectively and responsibly.

Effective control of invasive species along waterways often requires targeted herbicide applications, even when adhering to IPM principles. In some cases, this necessitates obtaining variance permits from the Board of Pesticides Control when treatments occur within regulated buffer zones. A significant number of these variances have been granted for invasive species management. The BPC has the opportunity to utilize its water quality program and available funding to ensure that these essential control measures are implemented without negatively impacting adjacent waterbodies. Simultaneously, this presents a valuable chance to enhance our understanding of best management practices for applicators. To address these considerations, we propose a focused water quality study to be conducted during the summer of 2025. This study will investigate potential contamination resulting from permitted herbicide treatments for invasive species management near waterways, leveraging data from past variance requests.

This project seeks to use the allocated 2025 lab funds from the EPA to evaluate the mitigation measures required by variances, specifically those involving herbicide applications for invasive plant control near waterways, on water quality. The study will involve collecting environmental samples from selected water bodies and adjacent areas to characterize the presence and concentration of relevant substances. This data will contribute to a broader understanding of the environmental implications of current management practices.

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While presenting just one potential area of focus for our 2025 water quality work, we have identified other avenues capable of yielding significant and timely data. These include the possibility of contributing to the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to enhance water quality data related to public drinking water through watershed sampling, the opportunity to extend and modernize our 2006 analysis of Brown-tail moth impacts by evaluating current injection methods, the potential to assess the prevalence of neonicotinoid pesticides in aquatic environments, or a study to measure the water quality impact of planned large-scale applications for Spruce Budworm control. Suggestions and open discussion are encouraged as we move forward into the 2025 season.