20 June 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1598, "An Act To Allow the Commercial Growth and Sale of Water Spinach in the State."

This bill would prohibit the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) from objecting to the approval of a federal permit to grow a noxious aquatic weed known as water spinach. The State has requested that the USDA deny these permits for a number of years because Maine has aquatic weed problems. This problem has become very expensive to combat and is affecting our valuable natural resources.

I fully support DACF working with any individual with permitting issues, but it is not right to mandate in statute that the department take a position on a permit when it may not be in the best interest of all Mainers.

For this reason, I return LD 1598 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor