TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 552

"An Act to Create an Outfitter License for Owners and Operators of Hunting, Fishing and Recreational Businesses That Are Not Maine Guides"

Presented by: Senator GUERIN of Penobscot.

DATE OF HEARING: Monday, February 24, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Dan Scott, Colonel of the Maine Warden Service speaking on behalf of Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in opposition to **L.D. 552.**

This bill changes the legal definition of a Guide, creates a definition of an Outfitter and establishes a new Outfitter license.

The bill would change the definition of a guide significantly, which the Department feels is problematic. Currently, a guide is defined as anyone who receives any form of payment for accompanying or assisting a person in the fields or forests or on the waters or ice in Maine. The bill proposes to remove the receipt of payment from the definition of a guide. This would mean, for example, that when a person takes a friend fishing or hunting it would be considered guiding and would require a Guide license. In addition, the bill also proposes that the term "when training is essential for the safety of the activity" be added to the definition of a guide. This proposal would open a whole area of discussion as to what activities might require safety training.

The bill also proposes to create the definition of an Outfitter and establish a new Outfitter license. The Department feels that this would be a burden on business owners and sees no good reason to do so.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.