

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES
AND WILDLIFE**

In Opposition to L.D. 1478

“An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Baitfish Wholesaler's Licenses”

Presented by Representative STROUT of Harrington. Cosponsored by Senator MOORE of Washington and Representatives: BRIDGEO of Augusta, CRAY of Palmyra, SOBOLESKI of Phillips, THORNE of Carmel, TUELL of East Machias, WHITE of Guilford.

DATE OF HEARING: Monday, April 14, 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 at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), speaking on behalf of the Department in opposition to L.D. 1478.

This bill amends the authorizations and restrictions applying to baitfish wholesaler's licenses. The bill allows a license holder to use the services of up to 2 unlicensed individuals to assist in harvest operations in inland waters of the State as long as the unlicensed individuals remain under the direct supervision of the license holder. The bill removes the restriction that prohibits a license holder from taking or selling suckers, also known as Genus Catostomus, greater than 10 inches in length between April 1st and September 30th of each year. Finally, the bill prohibits a license holder from attempting to take from inland waters live baitfish for resale using drop nets through the ice unless the license holder sufficiently marks the holes in the ice by evergreen boughs or fluorescent biodegradable tape.

Allowing a baitfish wholesaler license holder to authorize up to 2 unlicensed individuals to assist in harvest operations would cause an enforcement issue for warden service. It is unclear as written whether the term “unlicensed” refers to a wholesaler’s license, a recreational fishing license, or something else.

Title 12 12551-A subsection 2-B (license required) states that a person may not “engage in taking or assist in taking live baitfish for resale from inland waters without a valid baitfish wholesaler’s license.” The proposed language in this bill would contradict current law to allow “unlicensed individuals” to participate in harvest operations that clearly require a wholesaler’s license.

Currently, a baitfish wholesaler’s license is \$26.00. We do not feel that the cost or process of acquiring the license is an undue burden on individuals wishing to participate in harvest operations.

The department would, however, support modification of language as proposed by this bill in regard to the marking of holes used with drop nets on inland waters. We do not see a negative impact to holes

being marked with evergreen boughs or fluorescent tape and this language would align with language that already exists under smelt wholesaler's licenses. We would suggest modifying the bill by removing section 6 and simply add "evergreen boughs" to Title 12 Section 12551-A 6-B. (3) rather than restate this paragraph twice.

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