

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 635**

**“An Act To Repeal the Requirement To Obtain a Permit before Hunting with a
Noise Suppression Device”**

Presented by Senator STEWART of Aroostook.
Cosponsored by Senator: POULIOT of Kennebec.

DATE OF HEARING: March 24, 2021

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Dan Scott, Colonel of the Maine Warden Service speaking on behalf of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in support of **L.D. 635**.

This bill repeals the provisions of law allowing the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to issue permits to use noise suppression devices with firearms while hunting.

In June of 2015 the 127th Legislature passed *Public Law 262, An Act To Permit the Use of Firearm Noise Suppression Devices in Hunting and To Provide for a Chief Law Enforcement Officer's Certification for Certain Firearms* and it was scheduled to sunset on July 31st, 2018. This allowed the Department to issue suppressor permits to applicants upon successful completion of a Title 12 background check, with all permits expiring on July 31st, 2018.

In April of 2018, the 128th Legislature passed *Public Law 366, An Act Regarding the Termination of the Authority To Issue a Permit for a Noise Suppression Device on a Firearm for Hunting*. This allowed the Department to continue issuing suppressor permits, and the permits would remain valid unless revoked by the Department.

Since 2015 the Department has issued in excess of 500 permits, with new permit applications coming in almost weekly. To date, no permit has been denied, nor has a permit been revoked.

We appreciate the Legislature’s conservative approach to the use of this technology, and feel it is now appropriate to repeal the requirement for the Title 12 permit based on the past 5 years’ worth of data. To be clear though, this does not remove the federal requirements to possess a suppressor. There will continue to be a federal background check conducted on individuals who apply to possess a suppressor and the current law that makes it an aggravated penalty to violate a hunting law with a suppressor will stay in place and we would ask that this penalty remains in effect.

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