

LaCroix, Linda

From: Belinda Hawkins <bjh5836@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 9, 2019 11:18 AM
To: LaCroix, Linda
Subject: Oppose LD 337

To Linda LaCroix, Committee Clerk

Please copy and distribute the following comments to members of the IFW committee. Thank you for your assistance.

To: Chairs Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau, and Members of the IFW Committee

I submit the following comments in strong opposition to LD 337, a proposal to introduce a spring bear hunt in Maine.

The act of killing bears as they emerge from hibernation is not only unbelievably cruel, it is ethically indefensible. This practice is especially horrific as it relates to new mothers and their cubs! Mothers often leave their young to search for food, and their deaths in these instances, leave their cubs to die slow, painful deaths of starvation, predation, or exposure. There is no justification for an act that would surely lead to an abundance of avoidable deaths of bear cubs. Our state does not have the facilities or resources necessary to support those orphaned cubs, those fortunate enough to be found alive and in need of sanctuary, medical care, and rehabilitation. As a Maine citizen, I find even the proposal of such a bill completely unconscionable, and not in keeping with how the people of this state want to see our wildlife treated.

Concerns about increased bear populations is a manufactured problem with a direct link to the undocumented and unregulated baiting of bears whereby millions of pounds of high calorie, easily accessible foods are put into the woods every August. Even the IFW website concedes, "Nutrition plays a major role in determining the number of cubs that are produced, and cub survival..." I makes no sense to introduce a new season to reduce the bear population at the same time the IFW continues to allow baiting. Bears are already tortured and terrorized in the most reprehensible ways for nearly three months during the fall hunting season. It is a state and national shame that we are the only state left that allows all three methods of killing bears - baiting, hounding, and trapping. Should this bill pass, Maine will become one of the most hostile environments for bears in the entire country. Only a handful of states allow a spring bear hunt. Maine should not become a member of this shameful minority where two hunting seasons allow virtually no time for bears to live free from hunting threats.

The vast majority of Mainers are not hunters. While bear hunting may be lucrative for a few hunters and small businesses, economic interests should not outweigh our ethical interests and moral obligation to keep Maine bears safe and protected from cruel, inhumane practices. I believe I stand with the majority of Mainers who do not engage in activities that are cruel or cause the unnecessary suffering and deaths of bears, and I ask the committee to put an end to this proposal for a spring bear hunt.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Belinda Hawkins
Augusta, Maine