

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Fund Youth Conservation Education**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §11154, sub-§11**, as affected by PL 2003, c. 614, §9 and amended by c. 655, Pt. B, §§128 and 129 and affected by §422, is further amended to read:

**11. Auction of moose hunting permits to fund youth conservation education programs.** Notwithstanding subsection 1, the commissioner may issue not more than 510 moose hunting permits each year through public auction in accordance with this subsection for the purpose of promoting natural resource conservation education through scholarships for youth conservation programs.

- A. Each moose hunting permit issued under this subsection must be awarded through public auction to the applicant who submits the highest bid.
- B. A person who applies for a moose hunting permit under this subsection is subject to the eligibility provisions of subsection 5, except that a successful applicant is not required to wait 2 years in order to obtain another permit.
- C. An eligible person wishing to apply for a permit under this subsection must submit a written application in such form as the commissioner may require. The application must be accompanied by a bidding fee of \$25, which, except as otherwise provided in paragraph D, is nonrefundable. The commissioner may waive the requirements of this paragraph when, as provided in paragraph G, the commissioner enters into a contract with a conservation organization to auction the permits.
- D. An eligible person may apply for a moose hunting permit both through the public chance drawing and in accordance with this subsection. If a person is selected to receive a moose hunting permit as a result of the public chance drawing, that person is no longer eligible to obtain a permit under this subsection and the bidding fee submitted by that person must be refunded.
- E. A moose hunting permit issued under this subsection is valid in the district designated by the permittee. This designation must be made within 30 days after the permit is awarded.
- F. A person who is awarded a moose hunting permit under this subsection may select a subpermittee to participate in the moose hunt as provided in subsection 7.
- G. The commissioner may enter into a contract with a conservation organization whose goals and objectives are not inconsistent with those of the department to advertise this process of issuing permits, auction the permits and collect revenues.
- H. Except as otherwise provided, the provisions of this Part relating to moose are applicable to the hunting of moose with a permit awarded under this subsection.

I. The commissioner may adopt rules necessary for the proper administration, implementation, enforcement and interpretation of this subsection. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

J. Notwithstanding this subsection, the total number of moose hunting permits issued each year must be in accordance with section 11552, subsection 2.

K. The commissioner may decline to issue any permit or any number of permits issuable pursuant to this subsection if, in the commissioner's opinion, the auction bids received do not reflect the public value anticipated to meet the goals of this subsection. Any permit or permits not issued under this subsection must be drawn in the public chance drawing pursuant to subsection 9.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill raises the number of moose permits auctioned by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife from 5 to 10 permits and states that the purpose of the auction is to benefit conservation education for youth. It provides the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife the option of not issuing permits to bidders if the bids present a financial return insufficient to reflect the public value of the permits. It also provides that unissued permits are to be drawn in the public chance drawing.