



**Testimony in SUPPORT of L.D. 958 –
An Act to Expand Protections to Maine's Loons from Lead Poisoning by Prohibiting the Sale
and Use of Certain Painted Lead Jigs**

May 8, 2023

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, I am Reid Anderson, President of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization and a Registered Maine Guide. During the school year, I teach at Nobleboro Central School, and in the summertime, I guide for Northeast Whitewater in the Moosehead Lake region. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 958.

The Maine Wilderness Guides Organization consists of over 90 registered Maine guides, sporting camp and lodge owners, and their supporters. Our mission is to provide a unified voice for the profession of wilderness guiding while maintaining the highest professional, educational, and stewardship standards for the conservation of remote woods and waters. We are dedicated to the protection of habitat and natural resources in the areas we guide in for our livelihoods, our clients, the flora and fauna that reside there, and for future generations.

Healthy and abundant wildlife populations support guide businesses, and the Common loon in particular is important to guiding. Some wilderness guides exclusively lead trips to view wildlife, such as loons whose appearance and calls always interests clients. For fishing, kayaking, and other types of guides, spotting wildlife is a secondary but enjoyable part of trips. In either case, when we take clients on the water, they often ask questions about fish and wildlife. Viewing them is an essential aspect of the experience of being outdoors, and the Common loon is a special part of the nature of Maine that residents and visitors to the state alike revel in. As we all know, Maine's identity is closely tied to the health and sustainability of our natural resources.

LD 958 is needed because loons inadvertently ingest lead tackle, which causes health problems and eventually kills them. There are alternative tackle types that do not cause these lethal effects. LD 958 takes a reasonable approach to closing a loophole in the law and banning the use and sale of painted lead jigs of a certain size. It limits the size range to painted lead jigs that are ingestible by loons, and it phases in the ban over time. We believe this is a fair and common-sense piece of legislation that will go a long way in protecting loons and other waterfowl.

We respectfully urge the Committee to vote ought to pass on LD 958. Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.