



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2022

Legislative Document

No. 1991

H.P. 1477

House of Representatives, February 16, 2022

An Act Related to the Electronic Registration and Tagging of Big Game

Reported by Representative LANDRY of Farmington for the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to Resolve 2021, chapter 49, section 1.

Reference to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife suggested and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

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

2 **Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §12301-B** is enacted to read:

3 **§12301-B. Electronic registration of big game**

4 Beginning in 2024, the department shall allow electronic registration of big game. The
5 commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this section. The rules may include
6 exceptions to or electronic means of compliance with any of the requirements of this
7 chapter for a person who registers big game in accordance with the rules. For purposes of
8 this section, “big game” means bear, deer and moose. Rules adopted pursuant to this
9 section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

10 **Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §12302-A, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 121, §2, is further
11 amended to read:

12 **1. Requirement.** Except as provided in section 12307 or rules adopted under section
13 12301-B, a person who kills a bear, deer, moose or wild turkey shall:

- 14 A. Remain with that animal until it is registered, except as provided in section
15 12303-A;
- 16 B. Present that animal for registration in that person's name at the first open registration
17 station for that animal on the route taken by that person; and
- 18 C. Leave the registration seal attached to the animal in accordance with section
19 12301-A until that animal is processed and packaged for consumption.

20 **Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §12303-A, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 54, §11 and c.
21 121, §3, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

22 **1. Time limits.** Except as provided in subsection 1-A and in section 12307 or in rules
23 adopted under section 12301-B, a person may not keep any of the following unregistered
24 wild animals for more than 18 hours:

- 25 A. Bear;
- 26 B. Deer;
- 27 C. Moose; or
- 28 D. Wild turkey.

29 **Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §12304-A**, as repealed by PL 2021, c. 54, §12 and amended by
30 c. 121, §4, is repealed.

31 **Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §12304-B, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 54, §13, is amended
32 to read:

33 **2. Bear, deer and moose.** A Except as provided in rules adopted under section
34 12301-B, a person must present a bear, deer or moose for registration as follows.

- 35 A. A person shall present a bear, deer or moose in its entirety, including, but not limited
36 to, all edible meat and the head for registration, except that the viscera, hide, lower legs
37 and rib cage, including the ribs, spine and pelvis, are not required to be presented for
38 registration.
- 39 B. A bear, deer or moose may be dismembered for ease of transportation.

1 C. A person shall present evidence of the sex of a bear, deer or moose for registration.

2 **Sec. 6. 12 MRSA §12304-B, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 54, §13, is amended
3 to read:

4 **3. Biological samples.** The commissioner may require hunters to submit biological
5 samples from wild turkey, bear, deer or moose at the time of registration or as part of an
6 electronic registration process. The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this
7 subsection. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules pursuant
8 to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

9 **Sec. 7. 12 MRSA §12306, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 121, §5, is further
10 amended to read:

11 **1. Prohibition.** Except as provided in section 12307, a person may not possess any of
12 the following animals if that animal has not been legally registered as provided in this
13 chapter or rules adopted under section 12301-B, unless that animal is possessed in
14 accordance with chapter 921:

- 15 A. Bear;
- 16 B. Deer;
- 17 C. Moose; or
- 18 D. Wild turkey.

19 **Sec. 8. Report.** The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in conjunction with
20 adopting rules governing electronic registration of big game pursuant to the Maine Revised
21 Statutes, Title 12, section 12301-B, shall examine laws governing the tagging and
22 registration of harvested animals to determine if there are laws that should be updated or
23 revised to facilitate an electronic tagging system for big game. The department shall submit
24 a report of its findings and recommendations, together with any suggested legislation, to
25 the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and
26 wildlife matters by November 2, 2022. The committee may report out a bill related to
27 electronic tagging to the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

28 SUMMARY

29 This bill, which is reported out by the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries
30 and Wildlife pursuant to Resolve 2021, chapter 49, does the following.

31 1. It directs the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to adopt rules allowing
32 for the electronic registration of big game beginning in 2024. The bill defines big game as
33 bear, deer and moose.

34 2. It requires the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to report to the joint
35 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife
36 matters by November 2, 2022 on additional statutory changes needed in order to facilitate
37 the electronic tagging of big game. It authorizes the committee to report out a bill related
38 to electronic tagging to the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.