

STATE OF MAINE

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MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION
SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LD 163

“An Act to Increase Communication Between the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Lifetime License Holders by Requiring Free License Renewals Under Certain Circumstances”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Public Hearing Date: February 6, 2023
Testimony Against LD 163

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Shira Burns and I represent the Maine Prosecutors Association. I am here to testify against LD 163 solely in regard to any criminal offenses that are associated with this bill.

The criminal justice system is facing a large backlog of criminal cases because of the pandemic, which has been compounded with the lack of defense counsel available to represent indigent defendants. Prosecutors’ workload is at an all-time high and sincerely cannot take on more cases.

Furthermore, in this legislative session, as in last, we are advocating to reclassify many inland fishery and wildlife criminal offenses to civil violations. Criminal offenses have many unattended collateral consequence besides a criminal conviction. Since public safety is not jeopardized if a person violates this proposed legislation, the Maine Prosecutors Association urges you not to criminalize this behavior. In lieu of a criminal offense being a penalty, other consequences can be adjudged such as a minimum mandatory \$500 fine that cannot be waived or an Inland Fishery and Wildlife license suspension.

For these reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association is against LD 163 in regard to enacting a new criminal offense.

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