



Maine Professional Guides Association

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Testimony in Support of the Department and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Component of LD 258

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

February 27, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is James Cote and I am submitting this testimony in support of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's (DIFW) proposed budget components of LD 258, on behalf of the Maine Professional Guides Association.

While DIFW has historically been recognized as a chief steward of Maine's fish and wildlife, it is also important to point out that the agency has long been a great steward of Maine's budget resources and the dollars that flow to it from anglers, hunters, motorized recreational users and others.

The Maine Professional Guides Association is specifically supportive of the proposal to add additional resources to the Advisory Board for the Licensing of Guides. Over the last few years, there has been a significant uptick in the number of people seeking to become licensed professional guides. This has been good for our rural economy as well as our shared goal to get more people into Maine's outdoors. However, the pool of qualified and willing guide examiners is limited and with the demand for licensing on the rise, the job of examiner has morphed into much more of a time commitment than it historically has been. For these reasons, we would urge you to support the proposed budget that allows for more adequate, yet still modest, compensation for guide examiners. A quality system for the licensing of guides helps ensure the integrity of the professional Maine guide credential, and fosters safe and enjoyable experiences in the Maine outdoors.

More generally, we would urge you to support the overall DIFW proposed budget. The Maine Professional Guides Association is supportive of the trends we are experiencing with the agency, including proactive and informative communication with all outdoor users.

Thank you for your consideration, and we would be pleased to answer any questions or provide more information for your work sessions.

An organization of professional guides dedicated to promoting a quality, ethical outdoor experience.