



BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
NEW ENGLAND

February 1, 2025

Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD 95: An Act to Amend and Simplify Certain Wildlife Laws

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

I am John Simoneau, Maine Resident, submitting this testimony on behalf of New England Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA).

BHA seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting by supporting land conservation, public access to hunting and fishing areas, fair chase, and the sound management of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

On behalf of BHA's Maine members we are testifying in support of LD 95. Specifically, we are in favor of Sec. 12 MRSA 11401 that relates to the Department's rule-making authority to create special or expanded archery hunting seasons for the taking of deer to maintain deer populations in balance with available habitat. In recent legislative sessions there were adjustments to the any deer permit system in an effort to bring deer populations into balance. However, in some Wildlife Management Districts with any deer permits the harvest may still may not meet objectives. Increasingly residential development has fractured larger parcels reducing opportunities for the use of firearms. The expanded archery program was originally established to provide additional deer hunting opportunities in coastal and suburban settings characterized with high levels of residential development interspersed with small wood lots. It has a proven record of not impacting human safety and often expanded archery hunters are welcomed by landowners who are experiencing issues with damage to crops and landscape.

BHA supports making the two-day youth hunt permanent. We would suggest that the Committee and Department consider extending this opportunity to include novice hunters, which could be defined as a hunter who purchased first hunting or combination license within **one year** of the first day of this hunt. This is a hunt offered in Vermont, which could provide a more positive first experience for new adult hunters.

BHA also recognizes the value of non-game wildlife and supports the expanded authority to protect Species of Special Concern in Section 14 of the bill.



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In sum, we support the work the Department put into this Omnibus bill with only one suggested amendment for discussion. We would welcome more conversation with the Department around the concept of an Adult Novice hunt.

Sincerely

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