



Maine Professional Guides Association

55 Morrison Hill Road
Wilton, ME 04294

www.maineguides.org

Testimony in Opposition to LD 133 An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Nuisance Dogs February 6, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee, my name is James Cote and I am here today on behalf of the Maine Professional Guides Association in opposition to LD 133.

Many of our members own dogs for a variety of reasons- for legally hunting and tracking wild game, for seeking deer and moose antler sheds, to sled dogs. Often members own multiple dogs for these purposes, and even multiple groups of dogs to serve a variety of purposes.

While we respect the responsible ownership and training of all dogs, we have strong concerns about how this legislation may impact otherwise legal dog ownership and activity on property that is owned by the dog owner, or where they have permission by another property owner.

By not defining the term “excessive” we feel that this would open the door to a plethora of complaints for law enforcement and animal control officers to have to investigate and manage. Without more specificity or a more narrow scope, this legislation could easily invite false claims by some neighbors as a way of retribution to neighboring dog owners.

We also are concerned that the term “disturbing the peace of an individual” is not defined in this scenario. Obviously this can mean many things to many people. For example, is a kennel of barking dogs awaiting their meals each morning and evening disturbing the peace? This is a common phenomenon amongst many dog owners in the outdoor world, but if some neighbors don’t appreciate it, its easy to envision them having a new opportunity to bring law enforcement to the scene.

We believe that the vast majority of our members are respectful of their neighbors, and aware of their surroundings. However, especially with guides that own groups/kennels of dogs, it can sometimes be difficult to silence a group of hungry pups at dinner time, or a group of dogs that are anxious to go on a hunt. This of course is especially true of those dogs that are naturally bred to bark, howl, and yelp. This legislation paints dogs with too broad a brush, and would inadvertently target otherwise responsible dog owners for sometimes uncontrollable spurts of natural dog activity.

For these reasons, we oppose this legislation and ask that the committee defers enforcement of nuisance dogs to local communities through ordinances and community relations at the law enforcement and animal control levels.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be pleased to answer any questions or follow up with additional information as requested.

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