

February 23, 2025

From: Eric Ward, Greenville Jct. ME  
To: Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

**RE: LD 77 An Act to Stabilize and Sustainably Fund the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Fisheries and Hatcheries Division by Increasing the Inland Fishing License Fees and Establishing the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Fund**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Please find this testimony in support of LD77.

As a lifelong resident of the Moosehead Lake Region, I can share that our native fish are very important. Maine's allocation of federal Dingle-Johnson funds is disproportionately low, as the formula is based on land area rather than the state's extensive water resources, placing Maine at a disadvantage as compared to other states. The revenue increase generated by LD 77 would enable Regional Fisheries Biologists to expand their research and fieldwork on native fish populations. Species such as Brook Trout face increasing threats from multiple factors, and enhanced conservation efforts are essential. By supporting LD 77, it will provide the necessary resources to protect and sustain Maine's native fisheries, which are not only vital to the local ecosystem but also contribute significantly to the region's economy through recreational fishing tourism.