

March 1, 2025

710 West Road

Belgrade, Maine 04917

RE: LD 439 to allow Sunday hunting for persons 18 yrs or younger

Dear Senator Baldacci and Representative Roberts, and Members of the Inland Fish & Wildlife Committee:

I am writing to express my opposition to this bill to open the door to Sunday hunting. The bill applies to minors (18 years or younger), granting them permission to hunt on Sundays, a day currently reserved for landowners to be able to enjoy their own land without concern for their safety or fear of conflicts with hunters. This bill will particularly impact owners of open space from October 1 to the end of November, and during the spring turkey hunting season. The unfortunate reality is that many hunters do not ask permission to hunt on private property as we have experienced on several occasions.

My wife and I own 45 acres of field and woodland in Belgrade upon which we allow hunting when permission is requested. I am an avid deer and partridge hunter as well as a landowner. My opposition to this bill is based on our desire to have one day a week to allow my wife, dog and I to enjoy our land for walks, cutting firewood, and to work on our Christmas or apple trees without having to worry if a careless hunter shoots in our direction. It has already happened to us once.

Since the early 1980s the acreage of land available for hunting has become increasingly limited by subdivision development and posting. Surrounding towns in Kennebec County are experiencing similar limitations on areas available for hunting, as I have personally experienced when trying to find new hunting grounds in my Deer Management District. This bill will result in more private land being posted by landowners rather than give up the one day of week they can without fear use their own property during the fall and spring hunting seasons. If this bill passes we will be forced to consider posting our land, despite that I personally benefit from the landowner any doe permit process. Our neighbor, a non-hunter, and owner of 140 acres has expressed to me that Sunday hunting would push him over the edge and he would probably post his land.

This bill like prior Sunday hunting proposals will be deleterious to hunting opportunities in most of Maine for minors as well as adults due to the loss of acreage of private land open to hunting. I urge you to vote "ought not to pass" regarding LD 439.

Respectively,

George Seel, Belgrade

