

Robert Fisk, Jr.
Maine Friends of Animals
LD 356

Testimony of Robert Fisk, Jr.
Founder and Executive Director, Maine Friends of Animals
In SUPPORT of L.D. 356, "An Act to Require Notification of Certain Outdoor
Pesticide Applications
Committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry
March 6, 2025

Good morning Senator Ross, Representative Pluecker and members of the Committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry. My name is Robert Fisk, Jr., founder and Executive Director of Maine Friends of Animals. We are located in Falmouth and have been Maine's leading animal protection organization for almost three decades. We promote the humane treatment of animals through education, advocacy and legislation.

In March of 2007, Maine Friends of Animals sponsored LD 758, "An Act to Protect Household Pets and Other Animals from Poisoning," which addressed the effects of animals ingesting car antifreeze. Sponsor Rep. Emily Cain testified that the intent of the legislation was "To reduce the risk of poisoning of household pets and other animals, this bill requires that engine coolant or antifreeze that contains more than 10% ethylene glycol or propylene glycol must include an aversive agent that makes it taste bitter so that it rendered unpalatable."

Without the bittering agent, the antifreeze liquid is sweet; by some estimates, nearly 10,000 dogs and cats in America are poisoned annually by ingesting even very small amounts of antifreeze; many wildlife also die agonizing deaths ingesting the liquid. The cost to add the bittering agent was minimal, but the industry, led by the Consumer Specialty Products Association, lobbied against the bill. The bill passed, but with a caveat that three other Northeastern states must enact a similar law first.

On January 2011, Massachusetts signed an antifreeze bill into law. In recent years, 12 states have passed antifreeze legislation, including New Jersey and Vermont, equaling the three states in the Northeast and therefore requiring Maine to enact L.D 758. So four years later, a pleasant surprise of knowing that Maine helped lead the way on this legislation, which may ultimately become national law.

We view Sen. Bennett's bill, LD 356 to be similar in intent: to help reduce the unnecessary death of companion animals and wildlife due to poisoning. It is another common sense way to help mitigate the unnecessary tragic death of pets. And what makes this legislation even more attractive is that bill does not cause any hardship on anyone. It comes down to a neighborly notification. We encourage the committee to vote 'Ought to Pass' on L.D 356.