



132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, LD 1737

**"An Act to Ensure the Future of Maine's Sporting Camp Heritage"**

Testimony in Support as Amended by Sponsor

May 19, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Harvey Calden I am president of the Maine Sporting Camp Association and the owner of Tim Pond Wilderness Camps in Eustis, Maine.

So, what is a Sporting Camp? Well, in the mid to late 1800s Maine was a mostly uninhabited state with remote and unorganized territories teeming with fish and wildlife. Sportsmen came from Massachusetts, New York, and all over in search of this fish and wildlife. Entrepreneurial businesses provided lodging, meals, and guides. Tourism and Sporting Camps in Maine were born.

In the rural communities, each year it was a common phrase to say – boy - I'll be glad when the sports get here.

That's when the name Sporting Camp became common in every outdoorsman's vocabulary.

Commercially operated fishing and hunting camps grew to around 300 in the early 1900's. But today the few remaining struggle to keep their identities as a true sporting camp with income derived from fishing and hunting activities.

There are a few reasons for this, one is that we have recently been grouped into other categories of licensing, making it hard for us to market as a fishing and hunting destination. For example, a white-water rafting company, some hotels in populated areas, a music school on the coast, a vacation experience camp in Acadia National Park, and several more have been grouped into a sporting/recreational license we must operate under. We have little in common with these types of activities. We are a full-service fishing and hunting destination. A Sporting Camp.

We have lost a lot of traditional sporting camps in just the last few years. Some have been sold to private individuals or companies that are no longer open for the public to enjoy. Some have

been closed or torn down because of regulations. Some of our members that want to retire and sell their lodges have found buyers, however, despite passing regular health inspections, they are now being told that the new owners must comply with the same rules and regulations as a new hotel in downtown Portland. The demand is almost impossible for most camps, because they are off grid, in a remote location, and because of the large financial burden.

Some regulatory demands seem quite silly. One sporting camp owner told me that for his buyer to get a license the toilets would need to be moved 2 inches more from the wall because the new plumbing code required 15 inches separation instead of 13 inches. This sporting camp has passed health inspections for the last 60 years.

To save our iconic heritage, we believe that an existing Commercial Sporting Camp, that has been in operation for many years and passes a health inspection every year should be grandfathered from these urban regulations that are not necessary in remote locations.

Sporting Camps are working front and center to preserve the environment, the fish and wildlife, and the true Maine outdoor experience. They should not be burdened with crippling, unnecessary regulations.

Thank You.

Harvey Calden  
Tim Pond Camps  
197 Tim Pond Camp  
Eustis, Maine 04936  
207-578-1482