

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST
L.D. 305**

**“An Act to Provide Youth Lifetime Hunting Licenses to Eligible Dependents of Veterans
Who Are 100 Percent Disabled”**

Sponsored By: Representative HYMES of Waldo.

Cosponsored By: Representative WOOD of Greene
Representative NEWMAN of Belgrade
Representative THORNE of Carmel

DATE OF HEARING: February 13, 2023

Good afternoon Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Tim Peabody, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, neither for nor against **L.D. 305**.

This bill proposes to allow each eligible dependent of a veteran who is 100% disabled to receive one complimentary youth lifetime hunting license.

The Department would like to point out a few areas where it feels that clarification of the law should be considered. First, there is no standard definition of “dependent” in Title 12 so it would be good to define that in this section of law. Second, the proposed law does not specify that this would be for Maine residents only. We are not sure if that was intentional or not. In addition, we have been in contact with Veteran Services on this bill. They recommend that the term “100% disabled” be changed to “100% Permanent and Total”.

We would also point out that the number of licenses sold by the department is factored into the funding that the department receives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The licenses being discussed within this bill would be considered complimentary which means that they cannot be counted as a license “sold”, therefore reducing the number of licensed hunters and reducing the department’s eligibility for federal funding. This would also have a direct financial impact to the department with the loss of license revenue, requiring a fairly substantial fiscal note be attached to the bill so if the Committee decides to move forward with this legislation, the Office of Fiscal Policy and Program Review will be asked to provide that fiscal note.

We certainly appreciate the dedication and service that our veterans have given. Current fish and wildlife law offers numerous licensing opportunities that support our veterans. In this proposal we want the committee to fully consider both the pros as well as the cons of this possible opportunity for dependents of 100% permanent and total disabled veterans.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.