

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND
WILDLIFE**

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 1186

**Resolve, Directing the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
to Develop a Hunting and Fishing Software Application**

SPONSORED BY: Senator POULIOT of Kennebec

**CO-SPONSORED BY: Cosponsored by Representative PERRY of Bangor and
Senator: BLACK of Franklin.**

DATE OF HEARING: April 19, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Courtney Sirois, Marketing and Digital Communications Supervisor at Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **L.D. 1186**.

This resolve directs Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to develop a software application that a person can download onto a mobile device to allow them to access many of the Department's public accessible website pages related to hunting and fishing, licenses and permits. The Department would be required to complete the development of this mobile application by December 21, 2024, so it is available for use by the public during the 2025 hunting and fishing seasons.

We know that our hunters, anglers, trappers, and other outdoor enthusiasts continue to rely on digital resources. In 2022, 1.7 million people visited Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's website, 67% of those users viewed the website on a mobile device. More than 307,000 licenses and permits were purchased online, 63% of all license and permit sales.

In the past six years, MDIFW has developed several helpful online tools to better support our hunters and anglers and to maintain and grow our license sales and revenue stream for the agency. Some of these tools include a map-based display of special fishing laws, an ArcGIS map of our Wildlife Management Areas which are open to outdoor recreation, monthly fishing reports teaching anglers where to fish and seasonal local tips, informational videos, resource pages, cooking videos, and more. Most

recently, the Department launched the online-self-registration option for wild turkey. These digital tools will continue to evolve and expand.

In February of this year the Department formed an app committee to begin developing a mobile application. The committee is comprised of a representative of each MDIFW division including a game warden, fisheries biologist, licensing and technology director, wildlife biologist, and myself, marketing and digital communications supervisor; staff from the Office of Information Technology, and Tyler Technology representatives. The app will be developed by the NIC Division at Tyler Technologies.

The app committee began by testing and examining apps developed by other State wildlife agencies, including Tennessee, Colorado, New York, and Texas to determine useful features, layout, and speed. The group then identified three focus areas for the app:

- 1- License portal - The mobile app will allow users to purchase, download, and store fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses and permits for themselves and their family
- 2- Fishing tools – This will include identifying your current location as well as nearby fishing locations and the laws that apply to each.
- 3- Hunting and trapping tools - This will include identifying your current location, viewing maps of nearby Wildlife Management Areas, and viewing/downloading current hunting/trapping laws.

To identify other priority features, the committee created a public survey which was shared on Facebook, Instagram, and via email. The public could rate various features and enter their own suggestions. To date, more than 8,000 members of the public have completed the survey. The committee is currently evaluating public survey data.

The app will be launched in multiple phases, improving and/or adding new features over time. We plan to launch phase one by December 2024.

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