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May 8, 2023

Testimony of Rep. Tavis Hasenfus in support of
LD 958, An Act to Expand Protections to Maine's Loons from Lead Poisoning by
Prohibiting the Sale and Use of Certain Painted Lead Jigs
Before the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Tavis Hasenfus, and I represent House District 57 and the communities of Readfield and Winthrop. I am here before you today to present **LD 958, An Act to Expand Protections to Maine's Loons from Lead Poisoning by Prohibiting the Sale and Use of Certain Painted Lead Jigs**.

Those of you who were here for swearing in day, or for the many zoom bombs last session, have likely seen my daughter, Gavia. Yes, you heard that right, Gavia, as in Gavia Immer, AKA the Common Loon.

Before she was born, my wife and I were having an incredibly difficult time thinking of a name for our daughter. Then one beautiful summer day while my wife and I were floating on our boat in the middle of our favorite lake and pondering what we could name our first child, it suddenly became clear, at least to me. We were visited by a colony of loons with their ever present, soft, soothing calls that everyone knows and recognizes but few can replicate. I thought to myself, Gavia-how perfect. From that day forward, I knew my daughter's name.

Loons are so synonymous with Maine summers that they are nearly inseparable from our favorite lakes. Our state has even gone so far as to provide their likeness as the ambassador of the Maine Conservation plate. I support the bill before you because I can't imagine Maine without loons, and I believe that we must take all reasonable steps available to make sure we can protect them for generations to come.

I certainly understand the importance of fishing here in Maine. Fittingly, it is one of Gavia's favorite summer activities. However, as with so many of our favorite activities, we have an obligation to partake in a responsible manner. It seems only reasonable to ask our anglers to be considerate of loons and other wildlife in choosing their tackle. Legislation is all about finding the right balance, and I feel that this bill is doing just that. There is no doubt that lead can be extremely harmful to our wildlife, and there are many lead alternatives available for anglers. This bill is protecting Maine's wildlife, with only minor inconveniences. This, I would argue, is a responsible, balanced approach to conservation.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.