

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

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 2052

**“An Act to Provide Additional Moose Hunting Opportunities for Maine Youth
Experiencing Critical Illnesses”**

Presented by Representative LANDRY of Farmington.

DATE OF HEARING: January 22, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, my name is Judith Camuso, I am the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

This bill increases from 2 to 5 the number of moose hunting permits that may be issued to nonprofit organizations that provide hunting and fishing adventures to children with life threatening, critical or terminal illnesses and specifies that at least 3 of the permits must be issued to an organization based in Maine and given to children who are residents of the State.

This idea was brought to our administration last year to consider, so we were aware of the proposal and had time to discuss. The Department supports the ability to grant these permits that will create a lasting outdoor memory for a child who has a life-threatening illness.

Statute currently allows the Department to grant 2 moose hunting permits annually to nonprofit organizations at no cost for children under the age of 21 who are faced with a life-threatening illness. Over the years, the organizations that utilized these permits were typically from out of state and the child was also from out of state. This bill would allow the additional 3 permits to be provided to children who live in Maine. These permits do not impact the moose permits that would normally be issued in the same wildlife management district, and we see this as another opportunity to recruit young hunters while providing a once in a lifetime experience in the outdoors.

I am happy to answer questions at this time or during work session.