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DEPARTMENT OF  
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JUDITH CAMUSO  
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony of Judith Camuso, Commissioner  
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and  
the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

**“An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025”**

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Good morning Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Judy Camuso, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am here today to testify in support of the supplemental budget bill, LD 2214.

The supplemental budget is a balanced, prudent, and responsible proposal that advances the Governor’s long-held belief that we must continue to invest in the people of Maine, our greatest asset.

That is why the Governor’s proposal strikes the balance between making timely investments to address urgent needs – like public safety, mental health, housing, education, and health care – and saving money to ensure that our state continues to stand on strong fiscal footing in the future.

We look forward to working with the Legislature in the coming weeks to arrive at a budget that protects our fiscal health and that makes prudent and timely investments to support the health, safety, and welfare of Maine people.

**ATV Safety and Educational Program 0559**

The first Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-90 is the ATV Safety and Educational Program. This program ensures that persons aged ten to sixteen are in compliance with the law requiring them to complete a training program approved by the Department in order to operate such vehicles in the State of Maine. Recreational vehicle

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education programs are conducted to raise public awareness and promote better understanding of outdoor recreation safety issues and to encourage better support for recreational vehicle safety and enforcement efforts.

The only new initiative in this program found on **page A-90** reduces allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$7,302 in each year of the biennium to align allocations with revenue changes approved in the December 2023 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

### **Endangered Nongame Operations 0536**

The next Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-90** is the Endangered Nongame Operations program. This program provides management of nongame wildlife and endangered species to maintain and enhance various species of fish and wildlife as well as the ecosystems upon which they depend. Nongame wildlife includes all terrestrial and freshwater species that are not ordinarily collected, or taken for sport or profit.

The first new initiative in this program found on **page A-90** increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$395 in FY25. This represents this program’s portion of the approved reorganization of one Public Service Coordinator I position from a range 25 to a range 26. This initiative can also be found on **page A-92** and **page A-94** of the Budget document.

The second new initiative in this program found on **page A-90** increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$1,128 in FY25 and increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$1,132 in FY25 for the approved reorganization of one Public Relations Specialist position to one IF&W Senior Resource Biologist position. This represents the Endangered Nongame Species portion of this reorganization. This initiative can also be found on **page A-94** of the Budget document.

### **Enforcement Operations – IF&W 0537**

The next Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-91** is the Enforcement Operations program. The Maine Warden Service enforces Title 12, Chapters 901-939, enforces all rules promulgated by the Commissioner, and enforces the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Maine Warden Service also enforces the Maine boating and recreational vehicle laws (snowmobile and ATV). The Maine Warden Service is, by statute, responsible for searches for persons presumed lost or drowned in the fields, forests and inland waters of the State of Maine. Game Wardens of the Maine Warden Service are uniformed law enforcement officers with full police powers and statewide jurisdiction.

The first new initiative in this program found on **page A-91** increases General Fund appropriation by \$146,250 in FY24 to provide funding for the replacement of 130 handguns.

The next new initiative in this program found on **page A-91** increases General Fund appropriation by \$150,000 in FY24 to provide funding for 130 ballistic vest rifle plate inserts.

The third new initiative in this program found on **page A-91** increases General Fund appropriation by \$109,400 in each year of the biennium to provide funding for increased aircraft maintenance costs.

### **Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations 0535**

The next Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-92** is the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program. The Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program works to ensure that all species of inland fish in the State of Maine are maintained and perpetuated for their intrinsic, ecological and economic value. In addition, this program works to ensure that inland fisheries are available for recreational, scientific and educational use.

The first new initiative in this program found on **page A-92** increases General Fund appropriation by \$472,132 in FY25 and decreases allocation in Federal Expenditures Fund by \$484,478 in FY25. This initiative reallocates the cost of one Public Service Manager II position and one Public Service Manager III position and adjusts funding for related All Other costs due to a decrease in available federal grant funds.

The second new initiative in this program found on **page A-92** increases General Fund appropriation by \$224 in FY25 and increases allocation in Federal Expenditures Fund by \$591 in FY25. This represents this program's portion of the approved reorganization of one Public Service Coordinator I position from a range 25 to a range 26. This initiative can also be found on **page A-90** and **page A-94** of the Budget document.

The third new initiative in this program found on **page A-92** increases General Fund appropriation by \$38,021 in FY24 and by \$9,303 in FY25 to provide funding for the reorganization of one Superintendent Fish Hatcheries position from a range 30 to a range 32.

### **Licensing Services – IF&W 0531**

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-93** is the Licensing Services program. The Licensing Services – IF&W program is responsible for the administration and issuance of over 500,000 licenses, stamps and permits and the registration of 70,000 all-terrain vehicles, 80,000 snowmobiles and 120,000 boats. The Division accomplishes the sale of these licenses, permits and registrations through its work with over 750 sales agents located throughout Maine.

The only new initiative in this program found on **page A-93** increases General Fund appropriation by \$4,222 in FY25 and increases Other Special Revenue Fund allocation by \$4,222

in FY25 to provide funding for the approved reorganization of one Public Service Manager II position from a range 30 to a range 32.

#### **Office of the Commissioner – IF&W 0529**

The next Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-93** is the Office of the Commissioner program. The Commissioner's Office is responsible for the administration and management of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, develops and implements long range plans for the management and use of the state's fish and wildlife resources and the use of recreational vehicles, and supports services provided by central service agencies in areas common to all divisions such as the Office of Information Technology and the Natural Resources Service Center. The office is also responsible for the development, coordination, maintenance and evaluation of the Department's comprehensive fish and wildlife programs.

The only new initiative in this program found on **page A-93** provides a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$199,260 in FY24 for unbilled Workers Compensation premiums.

#### **Public Information and Education Division 0729**

The next Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-93** is the Public Information and Education Division. The Public Information and Education Division administers programs to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of inland fisheries and wildlife resources through public education, promotion, and dissemination of information.

The only new initiative in this program found on **page A-93** increases General Fund appropriation by \$10,866 in FY24 and \$5,060 in FY25 to provide funding for the approved reclassification of one Office Associate II position to an Office Specialist I position.

#### **Resource Management Services – IF&W 0534**

The next Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-94** is the Resource Management Services program. The Bureau of Resource Management is responsible for the management of the State's inland fisheries and wildlife resources and the development of rules governing the effective management of these resources. The Bureau maintains and enhances the State's fisheries and wildlife resources and habitats through acquisition and habitat improvement, manages wildlife sanctuaries and management areas, coordinates animal damage control functions and controls the importation and transportation of wildlife species and associated parasites and diseases within Maine.

The first new initiative in this program found on **page A-94** increases General Fund appropriation by \$735 in FY25 and increases Federal Expenditures Fund allocation by \$1,297 in FY25. This represents this program's portion of the approved reorganization of one Public

Service Coordinator I position from a range 25 to a range 26. This initiative can also be found on **page A-90** and **page A-92** of the Budget document.

The second new initiative in this program found on **page A-94** increases Other Special Revenue Fund allocation by \$40,000 in FY25 to provide funding for operating expenses for the Moose Research and Management program.

The third new initiative in this program found on **page A-94** increases Other Special Revenue Fund allocation by \$30,000 in FY25 to provide funding for operating expenses for the Black Bear Research and Management program.

The fourth new initiative in this program found on **page A-94** increases Other Special Revenue Fund allocation by \$111,297 in FY25 to continue and make permanent one IF&W Resource Biologist position previously established by financial order.

The fifth new initiative in this program found on **page A-94** increases General Fund appropriation by \$1,063 in FY25, increases Federal Expenditures Fund allocation by \$3,388 in FY25, and increases Other Special Revenue Fund allocation by \$4,517 in FY25 for the approved reorganization of one Public Relations Specialist position to one IF&W Senior Resource Biologist position. This represents the Resource Management - Wildlife portion of this reorganization. This initiative can also be found on **page A-90** of the Budget document.

The sixth new initiative in this program found on **page A-94** increases Federal Expenditures Fund allocation by \$1,857 in FY25 and increases Other Special Revenue Fund allocation by \$5,576 in FY25 to provide funding for the approved reorganization of one IF&W Senior Resource Biologist position to one IF&W Resource Supervisor position.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.