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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

IN SUPPORT OF LD 40

An Act to Make Changes to the Commercial Large Game Shooting Area (CLGSA) License Transfer Process

January 28, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, I am Craig Lapine, Director of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). I am here today to speak in support of LD 40, *An Act to Make Changes to the Commercial Large Game Shooting Area (CLGSA) License Transfer Process*.

A Commercial Large Game Shooting Area is an enclosed space where large game are kept and customers pay a fee to hunt these animals. CLGSAs are stocked with specific, permitted, non-native species, primarily four members of the deer family: red deer, elk, sika, and fallow deer. These non-native cervids are bred on Maine deer farms, with both CLGSAs and deer farms regulated through DACF's captive cervid program.

This bill would amend the statute governing CLGSA license transfers. It would grant the Commissioner final authority to approve license transfers when applicants meet statutory requirements.

Under current law, license holders must notify the Commissioner 30 days before a transfer, providing the transfer date and the recipient's name, mailing address, and telephone number. This notification does not give the Department any authority or active oversight role to ensure a viable transfer/sale or a license before it occurs.

Maine statute has a maximum of 11 CLGSA facilities, and license transfers occur infrequently. However, the law currently does not require any verification from the Department that new license holders meet the requirements and obligations outlined in subsection 2 of the statute before such a license transfer takes place, which has caused challenges. Specifically, an individual purchased a CLGSA facility in a private transaction in 2023, and although the existing 30-day license notification standard was met, the new owner was unprepared and unable to meet the requirements of the license. This meant that when the license expired, the purchaser was

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ineligible to have it renewed. For example, licenses are species-specific, and requirements may include provisions for appropriate zoning and ample acreage for the type of animal at the facility.

Adding this review and verification step will ensure that future license transfers and sale transactions can only be completed once the Department has had a chance to confirm that buyers can successfully meet the licensing requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer questions now and at the work session.