

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

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 73

“An Act to Designate the Wood Turtle as the Official State Reptile”

SPONSORED BY: Representative OSHER of Orono.

COSPONSORED BY: Senator BRENNER of Cumberland and Representative: ANKELES of Brunswick

DATE OF HEARING: Monday, February 3, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee. I am Phillip DeMaynadier, Wildlife Diversity Section Supervisor at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **L.D. 73**.

This bill designates the wood turtle as the official state reptile.

Many states designate official species (e.g., state tree, flower, bird, etc.) as a way of showing pride in their natural heritage and for raising public awareness of a particular species group. For example, the 131st legislature recently designated the Pink-edged Sulphur as the official state butterfly. This bill would designate the Wood Turtle (1 of 6 native [nonmarine] turtles in Maine) as the official state reptile of Maine. The Department recommends support for this designation as Maine does not have a state reptile, and to our knowledge no other U.S. jurisdiction has designated this species. The Wood Turtle is also a good choice because it is: exceptionally attractive, distributed statewide, and closely associated with clean rivers flowing through intact forested watersheds, which remain thankfully abundant in Maine.

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