

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

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND
WILDLIFE**

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 27

**“An Act to Amend and Simplify Certain Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Licensing and
Permitting Laws”**

SPONSORED BY: Senator Carney of Cumberland

DATE OF HEARING: February 3, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Dan Scott, Colonel for the Maine Warden Service at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of L.D. 27, An Act to Amend and Simplify Certain Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Licensing and Permitting Laws. This includes proposals to combine different requirements for landowners hunting, trapping or fishing on their own land without a license, so the thresholds are consistent and easier for staff, hunters and anglers to remember and adhere to. It will also clarify the requirements for moose permit transfers regarding who the permit holder can transfer that permit to. This bill is broken into 6 sections, and I will review each of them by section, starting with section 1.

Section 1 of the bill seeks to combine and simplify the requirements for resident landowners, and their immediate family members, to hunt without a license on their own land. More specifically, for the activity of hunting, it adds clarity by explicitly stating that in addition to hunting with archery equipment or a muzzleloader, the person may also hunt with a firearm (this is something the Department already honored but this makes it clear in law).

This section of the bill also changes the provision of law governing the amount of land the resident is required to own and live on in order to qualify to hunt on that land without a license, which is 10 or more contiguous acres in size. It also repeals the requirement that the land be used exclusively for agricultural purposes.

Section 2 amends the definition of ‘family member’ in the provision governing transfers of moose permits to family members in the case of extenuating circumstances. More

specifically, it would remove the term 'half sibling', acknowledging that 'half' is not a required indicator and a 'half sibling' would be covered with the already existing term 'sibling'. Additionally, the definition of 'family member' would be further amended to include the transferor's sibling's child, the transferor's spouse's sibling's child, the transferor's parent's sibling or that sibling's spouse. These family members are in addition to the already included family members listed who are the transferor's spouse, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, grandparent, stepparent, sibling, or adopted child. If the committee is interested in making both definitions of family member the same, you may consider adding the term 'stepgrandchild' to section 11154, subsection 15. We would also suggest the removal of 'adopted child', as we are unsure why they wouldn't fall in the category of 'child' and this term is not used in section 11154, subsection 18.

Section 3 of this bill amends a provision governing deferment of moose permits to the next moose hunting season when a member of the permit holder's household was also awarded a moose permit for that same hunting season. This bill will add spouse and sibling as qualified members of a permit holder's 'household'. The Department is honoring spouses and siblings when requests of this nature are made, and this does meet the intent of the legislative law that was passed in 2023. For the purposes of this subsection, members of a household will now be limited to a grandparent, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, grandchild, step grandchild, spouse or sibling sharing the same legal address.

Sections 4 and 5 of this bill seeks to make the requirements for a resident landowner, and their immediate family members, trapping on their own land without a license to be consistent with hunting or fishing on their own land without a license.

Section 4 will remove the requirement the land is used exclusively for agricultural purposes, for resident landowners, and their immediate family members, to trap on their own land without a license.

Section 5 of this bill adds the requirement that the land is 10 or more contiguous acres in size for resident landowners, and their immediate family members, to trap on their own land without a license if they live on that land.

Section 6 of this bill seeks to make the requirements for a resident landowner, and their immediate family members, fishing on their own land without a license to be consistent with hunting or trapping on their own land without a license. This section will add the provision of law governing the resident's land on which they are legally domiciled on must be 10 or more contiguous acres in size. Lastly, this section will remove the requirement that the land is used exclusively for agricultural purposes, for resident landowners, and their immediate family members, to fish on their own land without a license.

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