

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee.

From: Mr. Brooke Hidell, Master Maine Guide and Casco resident.

Good afternoon,

My name is Brooke Hidell and I come before you today to present my testimony in favor of proposed bill LD 77. As a Master Maine Fishing Guide entering my 26<sup>th</sup> year, I have had several opportunities to interact with members of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Of late, most of the aforementioned interactions occur because of situations that pose a threat to the well-being of a fishery (e.g. dam malfunctions or inadvertent dewatering of watersheds). Whenever I have expressed concerns, the regional biologists have been very diligent in addressing those same concerns and taking appropriate proportional action. The department's agility in this regard is a very valuable asset to the people and fisheries of Maine. As climate change continues to effect Maine fisheries, primarily through various extremes (e.g. high and low water level events, warming river temperatures, etc.), it is critical that the department be funded appropriately to ensure operational readiness now and into the future. The proposed Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Fund will certainly facilitate a nimbler response to these ongoing challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of this long overdue and necessary legislation.

Sincerely,

Brooke Hidell