

Date: February 24, 2025

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

From: Glen Gisel, Lifelong angler, owner of Sebago Sport Fishing and Guide Service and HTI Custom Metal Fabrication

Raymond, Maine.

Good afternoon, my name is Glen Gisel and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 77, a bill to increase the cost of a Maine fishing license and establish the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Fund.

I am a Registered Maine Guide, I've owned Sebago Sport Fishing and Guide Service for 7 years, have been a self-employed welder, fabricator, machinist and all-around tinkerer for more than 30 years. I've also been an avid sportsman with a passion for fishing since I was a young kid, and I believe it is essential for today's kids and kids of the future to have the same opportunities to use and enjoy the waters and fisheries of Maine that I have had for nearly 50 years.

When I started the guide business, I decided it was in my best interest to work with the fisheries division and learn how our fisheries are managed to make myself a better and more knowledgeable guide and use my knowledge and skills as both a tradesman and an angler to help improve and preserve this incredible resource.

Since that time, I have worked with Jim Pellerin, Liz Latti, Dylan Whitiker, and other members of the fisheries division on various projects both in the field and in the shop. A common issue with these projects is limited funding; the budgets are always insufficient and as a result, in the shop I typically only charge my cost for materials and donate most of, if not all of my time to ensure these projects can be completed within the available budget and for projects in the field, such as the Mooselookmeguntic telemetry study, I donate my services in exchange for the opportunities and education. From my firsthand experience, I understand the financial challenges faced by the fisheries division and believe that this increase in funding is necessary and justified.

This relationship puts me in a unique position between the fishing community and IF&W so I get to see both sides, like most anglers, I see a lack of transparency from the department and the original draft of LD 77 addressed that with a separate account that the funds from this increase went into and did not go into the general fund and the funds were specifically earmarked for what they were going to be used for, I spoke to dozens of my angling colleagues and they were all in total support of the original draft, however the amended bill puts the money into the general fund and the public's perception is that money can now be used for anything including things outside of the fisheries division and made the amended bill far less appealing to anglers and made most of them feel like it's "just another money grab by the state".

I would also like to take this opportunity to address my one and only concern with this bill and our fisheries in general and that is the invasion of northern pike in our waters, I hope I am wrong, but from what I have seen in my lifetime, at the rate they are spreading I firmly believe in 50 years they will be in every body of water in the state of Maine and in 100 years, pike and a few other warm

water species will be the only thing left unless something is done to slow them down. If the money from this increase is being used for conservation and enhancement of our native and stocked species for future generations, I feel that a study and a plan to manage the growing northern pike population should be considered.

Regardless of the outcome, I anticipate and look forward to continuing this relationship that is mutually beneficial to the fisheries division objectives, recreational anglers and the livelihoods of not only myself but the other Maine Guides that depend on healthy fisheries to pay the bills and put food on their tables.

Thank you all for your time.