



**To:** Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
100 State House Cross Building Room 206  
Augusta, ME 04333

**Re:** LD 820 – Constitutional Amendment to establish the Right to Hunt  
and Fish

**Position:** Support

**Date:** March 11, 2025

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Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

My name is Fred Bird, and I am the Manager, Eastern States for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) and a licensed Maine sportsman. I am writing to you in support of LD 820. The passage of LD 820 would amend Art. IX, §26 of the Maine State Constitution guaranteeing that the citizens of Maine have the right to hunt and fish with the use of traditional methods, for decades to come.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Hunting and fishing, with the use of traditional methods, have been a component of this land's tradition and heritage dating back to before the Europeans arrived in North America. To ensure our sporting heritage continues so future generations can enjoy our traditions as we are presently able to in Maine, 24 states have already provided explicit protection for their citizens' right to hunt and fish through their constitutions. Through LD 820, Maine could become the 25<sup>th</sup> state to do so.

Protecting the right to hunt and fish with traditional methods of harvesting wildlife is essential for conservation - not only for Maine's game species, but for Maine's nongame species as well. For example, 95% of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) is comprised of sportsmen and women generated dollars. By protecting the right to hunt and fish wildlife by traditional methods, you are also protecting the state's ability to conserve wildlife, fish, and their

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habitats. Additionally, hunting continues to be the most effective and cost-effective wildlife management tool. Hunters are not only participating in conserving and managing wildlife populations, but they are paying the state for the ability to do so, which is truly a savvy business model, especially in challenged economic times.

Vermont was the first state to adopt a constitutional provision protecting the rights of its citizens to hunt, fish, and trap. The right has been protected since 1777. Other states that have amended their constitution to protect hunting, angling, and trapping include: Alabama (1996 & 2014), Arkansas (2010), Georgia (2006), Idaho (2012), Indiana (2016), Kansas (2016), Kentucky (2012), Louisiana (2004), Minnesota (1998), Mississippi (2014), Montana (2004), Nebraska (2012), North Carolina (2018), North Dakota (2000), Oklahoma (2008), South Carolina (2010), Tennessee (2010), Texas (2015), Utah (2020), Virginia (2000), Wisconsin (2003), and Wyoming (2012).<sup>1</sup> In 2024 Floridians resoundingly voted in favor of Florida Amendment 2, making Florida the 24<sup>th</sup> state guaranteeing its citizens the right to hunt and fishing using traditional methods.

In closing, it is important to note that this amendment will not interfere with MDIFW's authority and ability to manage wildlife and fish, nor will it interfere with their ability to set seasons and bag limits – just as these protections haven't impeded the respective state fish and wildlife agencies in the 24 states where these rights exist currently. Additionally, this amendment will not remove existing trespassing laws or interfere with existing property rights. This amendment will solely solidify and protect the right to hunt and fish as many Mainers have been doing for centuries. With this, I respectfully request your support of LD 820.

Sincerely,



Fred Bird  
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<sup>1</sup> Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation 2024 Issue Brief