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Testimony in Support of L.D. 1322, *"Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Enhance Youth Hunting Participation"*, before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Presented on behalf of David Trahan, Executive Director, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine.

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine supports L.D. 1322, Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Enhance Youth Hunting Participation. We thank Representative Roberts for introducing this bill.

Eight years ago, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine began building a facility to teach all forms of outdoor education. SAM's Outdoor Education Center is now under lease to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and is also used by several other youth organizations. It has two fishing ponds, a shooting range, two classroom spaces, 3 miles of hiking trails, and several outdoor education areas.

Our facility is only 3 miles from the statehouse and would be used for the purpose proposed in this bill. We also partner with 65 Fish and Game Clubs in Maine that would likely participate as well.

Early this week we introduced the legislation that proposes teaching all Inland Fisheries and Wildlife programs. It also uses a pilot concept to create satellite learning centers in partnership with the Department. We would like to extend an invitation to the committee to visit our facility, hopefully, before working on this bill and ours. I believe our bill, sponsored by Senator Stewart, will dovetail perfectly with this bill. The department has indicated they are concerned with funding; we are not.

Several years ago, SAM introduced legislation to dedicate a \$1 hunting license increase to be allocated to the department's education programs. If a comprehensive bill passes, we will assist in securing necessary funding.

We hope this committee will wait until our bill is heard in a public hearing and work them together. We have no concerns with combining our ideas with Rep. Roberts' bill and doing a committee bill.

We have fish and game clubs throughout the state, eager to train their members to be instructors and conduct mentoring programs and act as learning centers.

Thank you,

David Trahan, Executive Director

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