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April 7, 2025

Testimony in Support of L.D. 1343, *"An Act to Protect the Right to Harvest Wildlife"*
Presented on behalf of David Trahan, Executive Director, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine,
before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

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

The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action is testifying in
support of L.D. 1343, "An Act to Protect the Right to Harvest Wildlife". First, we would
like to thank Senator Hickman for his bold leadership in helping to pass the Right to Food
Constitutional Amendment. We stood beside Senator Hickman and helped lead the
passage of this comprehensive protection for Maine people.

Earlier this session, legislation was introduced to add an additional hunting and
fishing Constitutional Amendment. We now understand that the Resolve is not needed.
What we do believe is necessary is the language in Sen. Hickman's bill, L.D. 1343, to
bring into alignment with the new Supreme Court's ruling on March 28, 2024. I was
quoted in a News Center story on that date as saying, "Thursday's ruling was important in
clearing up legal ambiguity".

On March 28, 2024, the Supreme Court made it clear the word "harvest" in the
Right to Food Amendment, included the right to hunt and fish. The fact that the Supreme
Court had to make this legal distinction and interpretation reinforces the need for this
committee and the legislature, to make harvest definitions clear in the Inland Fisheries
and Wildlife, Title 12 Statute.

The modernization and realignment of the statute, with the Supreme Court ruling, should put this issue to rest. We have always supported the right to hunt and fish but view the right to food amendment as broader and capturing the most fundamental of rights - the right to choose what we put in our bodies.

I understand the Department's concerns around altering the definition, but a whole new era of law and legal precedent will be settled over the next generation in court rulings. The oppositions and department's concerns with the word "harvest" were expressed before and after the amendment passed. Those that opposed the amendment had their chance to defeat it in the legislature and at the ballot box. Both are water under the bridge and settled.

It is time to make this clarification in statute and accept the fact that Mainers want the ability to decide what they feed their families, including wildlife deemed appropriate by statutes passed by this and future legislatures.

Special thanks to Senator Hickman for his bold and unwavering leadership on this important individual liberty.

Thank you,

David Trahan, Executive Director

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