

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST L.D. 1430**

**“An Act to Promote the Welfare of Disabled Veterans Through the Transfer of
Moose Permits”**

Sponsored by: Representative PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft. (BY REQUEST)
Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: CHAPMAN of
Auburn, DILL of Old Town, FREDETTE of Newport, MCINTYRE of Lowell,
SOBOLESKI of Phillips, THORNE of Carmel, WHITE of Guilford, WHITE of
Ellsworth

DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Timothy Peabody, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, neither for nor against to **L.D. 1430**.

This bill amends the laws governing moose permit transfers to disabled veterans for certain organizations or individuals if they meet certain eligibility requirements:

1. Nonprofit veteran aid organizations based in this State that promote the mental and emotional welfare of veterans in this State by providing outdoor opportunities;
2. The employees and volunteers of nonprofit veteran aid organizations based in this State that promote the mental and emotional welfare of veterans in this State by providing outdoor opportunities; and
3. Registered Maine guides who are residents of this State.

The bill allows for eligible organizations or individuals who obtain a moose permit in the lottery to transfer the permit to a disabled veteran, the eligible organization or individual can apply for a moose permit again the following year and may also start accumulating points for the public chance drawing for a moose permit the following year.

The Department supports efforts to provide disabled veterans more opportunities to hunt and fish in Maine. Currently law and rule, allows several opportunities for disabled veterans to obtain a moose permits. Each year the Department supports a depredation hunt in Aroostook County. Thirty permits are provided for disabled veterans to take moose that are causing damage to broccoli fields in eastern Aroostook County. They have an additional opportunity in current law where any person who receives a moose permit

can transfer that permit to a disabled veteran. The Department works with the Department of Veteran's Affairs in both of these situations to facilitate distributing these permits for qualified veterans.

In 2024, we had 39 moose permits donated to disabled veterans from over 4,000 moose permits drawn in the regular moose lottery which included the 4A Adaptive Hunt. MDIFW successfully matched the 34 permits with disabled veterans. Five Adaptive Hunt permits were not matched with a disabled veteran. As previously mentioned MDIFW works closely with the Bureau of Veteran's Affairs to find qualified veteran hunters. We are also asked by individual permit winners to transfer their permit to a qualified disabled veteran that they know personally.

Section 2 and 3 of the bill allows certain organizations and employees of these organizations to re-enter the year after winning a permit provides them with a chance to participate in two hunts in two consecutive years. This added opportunity for those who transfer their permits has a negative impact on the other general applicants who apply but don't receive a permit. This system is designed to enhance the likelihood of success for those who have not won recently, while still enabling the permit holder to accumulate bonus points for future applications. This approach ensures that they can leverage these points when they are eligible to enter the lottery again, allowing for a balance between rewarding past winners and giving others a fair chance.

Section 4 of the bill pertains to resident registered Maine guides. The proposed language is very challenging to follow, but it appears to allow a guide to transfer a permit to a disabled veteran without remuneration and retain their (the guides) ability to apply for a permit again the following year.

In closing if the Committee chooses to move the bill forward consideration needs to be made to the administrative implementation of this opportunity.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.