

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 1565

**“An Act to Allow the Use of Certain All-terrain Vehicles on Snowmobile
Trails.”**

PRESENTED BY: Representative HYMES of Waldo

CO-SPONSORED BY: Representative GUERRETTE of Caribou

DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday, April 23, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Timothy Peabody, Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in opposition to **L.D. 1565**.

This bill provides that when registering an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), a person may purchase an endorsement for \$25 that allows them to switch between tires and snow tracks for the registration period to operate on snowmobile trails in the State. The endorsement is in the form of stickers, which must be displayed on the front and back of the ATV.

While it appears this is an attempt to simplify and reduce the cost for an ATV operator to be able to register their ATV one time a year and ride both with tires on ATV trails and then switch to tracks and ride in the winter, as written we have significant concerns.

For background information when you put tracks on an ATV in the winter it meets the definition of a snowmobile which allows it to be registered and ridden on state-maintained snowmobile trails, and other private and public lands within the state. This bill would eliminate the requirement to get a separate snowmobile registration by adding a \$25.00 endorsement sticker to an existing ATV registration to allow the machine to be operated as a snowmobile.

The primary concern of our Department and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Off-Road Vehicle Division is the loss of revenue. If passed as written, a Maine resident would pay \$95 to register their tracked ATV as an ATV and a

snowmobile for that registration year, which is a revenue loss of \$30.00 per resident dual registration. A nonresident with the same scenario would pay \$140.00 for a full season ATV registration and a full season snowmobile registration, which is a revenue loss of \$94.00 per nonresident dual registration. Our records indicate that there are roughly 300 – 400 tracked ATVs registered both as an ATV and a snowmobile each year.

The chart below shows a sample of the complexity of the breakdown of a single snowmobile registration as currently directed by statute. All of these program areas would be affected by this proposed registration change.

	Resident	Non Res.
Snowmobile Registration Fee	\$ 55.00	\$ 119.00
Trail Fund (52%) (Plate 70%)	\$ 30.24	\$ 81.36
Grooming Equipment Fund	\$ 10.00	\$ 15.00
Enforcement Fund		\$ 5.63
General Fund (22%) (Plate 30%)	\$ 5.61	\$ 14.48
General Fund (Admin Fee)	\$ 2.53	\$ 2.53
Donation Admin Fee	\$ -	
Municipalities	\$ 6.62	

While this bill addresses the efficiency for the owner of an ATV to get a dual registration, as I have shown it does not support the existing statutory distribution of the fees. The fees which support the infrastructure of Maine's vast snowmobile trail network which is generously offered by private landowners and supported by volunteers will be reduced. If the committee chooses to move forward the Department request clarification on the application of the endorsement to 3-day and 10-day non-resident registrations. Additionally, the Department will have an additional fiscal impact for programming the MOSES licensing system, sticker inventory costs, and would request an implementation date of possibly May 2026 or later.

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