



# Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action

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Testimony in Support of L.D. 441, An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Fish and Wildlife, before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

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

My name is David Trahan, I am the Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action, and I am testifying in support of L.D. 441, *An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Fish and Wildlife*, sponsored by Rep. Roberts. Thank you, Rep. Roberts, for sponsoring this important bill.

Natural Resource agencies like Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, mostly depend on license fees and federal money to support the protection of Maine's invaluable wildlife and natural resources. The department does receive some General Fund money to support non-game species and other programs, but as you know, over time, inflation consumes budgets and there must be periodic license fee increases or cuts in programs. This pressure to do more with less is even more intense when budget cuts are necessary, like now.

This bill is designed to capture interest income generated in the protected deer management account to reinvest in purchasing and managing deer wintering areas, assisting landowners, and reducing predation on deer.

IFW Land deals often take years to close so the antlerless deer permit money sits in the state cash pool generating interest to subsidize General Fund spending unrelated to wildlife protection. Not only does this raise concerns as it relates to IFW's Constitutional fee protections, but it is also just wrong to have antlerless deer permit money and tagging fees subsidizing the General Fund.

This bill would direct interest back into the Deer management account, but also, it provides millions of dollars in state and federal 3 to 1 matching dollars for deer yard conservation in the future. It honors Article IX, Subsection 22 of the Maine Constitution, in returning all income generated in this fund to the department for intended purposes. This bill, and previous legislation that created the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund, (two million in interest generated so far) are part of a package of bills our organization has put forward or will be putting forward with our friends and partners at the Nature Conservancy and Maine Coast Heritage Trust, that will overhaul how we fund land and wildlife conservation. Expect more legislation to come.

#### **ART. IX §22 | REVENUES GENERATED BY FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

The amount of funds appropriated in any fiscal year to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or any successor agency responsible for fisheries and wildlife management, other than commercial marine fisheries management, may not be less than the total revenues collected, received or recovered by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or successor agency, from license and permit fees, fines, the sale, lease or rental of property, penalties and all other revenue sources pursuant to the laws of the State administered by the department or successor agency, except that revenues received from the Federal Government may be allocated as provided by federal or state law and the Legislature may establish special funds and deposit revenues collected, received or recovered by the department or successor agency into those special funds, provided that the revenues are allocated and expended only for the purposes of those special funds as provided by law.

Thank you,

David Trahan

Executive Director

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