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Testimony of Rep. Tiffany Roberts

LD 2054, An Act to Clarify the Laws Regarding Moose Hunting Permits for Hunting Outfitters

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am Tiffany Roberts, and I represent House District 149, which includes parts of North and South Berwick. I am here today to present a proposed clarifying committee amendment for **LD 2054, An Act to Clarify the Laws Regarding Moose Hunting Permits for Hunting Outfitters**.

LD 2054 was submitted as a Department placeholder bill to allow interested parties to bring forward clarifications to the moose hunting outfitter permit program. The amendment before you today reflects that intent. It is stakeholder-driven, Department-informed and focused on clarity, not expansion.

At its core, this amendment does four things.

First, it clearly vests final eligibility determinations with the Department, subject to appeal to the Commissioner. The Department, not the Health Inspection Program or any other entity, will determine whether an applicant qualifies as a hunting outfitter, based on licensing, public records and historical information. This directly addresses concerns about inappropriate applicants while preserving due process.

Second, the amendment standardizes application and permitting timelines. Clear deadlines are established for applications, notifications and payments. Once the permit fee is paid by May 1, the permit is confirmed and may not be recalled except in cases of fraud or material misrepresentation. This protects hunters from last-minute invalidations caused by issues outside their control.

Third, the amendment clarifies operational realities that already exist. It confirms that outfitters may work with booking agents, guides and other lodges to provide high-quality hunts. It also authorizes reasonable, fee-based permit modifications and confirms that lodge permits may be

deferred or swapped, consistent with long-standing Department practice and without impacting wildlife management.

Finally, the amendment removes the three-year waiting period for lodge permits. These permits are not part of the general lottery, and the policy rationale for a waiting period does not apply. Removing it also eliminates the need for statutory workarounds related to sub-permittee designation sales.

This program has generated significant economic activity in rural Maine, supporting sporting camps, guides, local businesses and conservation funding, without cost to taxpayers. The amendment keeps the program administratively sound, biologically responsible and economically effective.

In short, this amendment clarifies authority, codifies practice and protects the integrity of the program. I urge the committee to support it.

Thank you, and I'm happy to answer questions.