



Written Statement Submitted for the Record by
Nathan A. Theriault, Owner
OMM Outfitters

In support of Clarifying Amendment to:
L.D. 2054:

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

1:00 pm, January 21, 2026,

Before the:

Members of the Joint Standing Committee:
Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee, my name is Nathan Theriault from Eagle Lake, and I am the owner of OMM Outfitters. As we begin our 24th year specializing in moose hunts, having successfully booked over four hundred such expeditions, I would like to express both my support and that of my clients for the Amendment to L.D. 2054, which seeks to clarify Moose Hunting Permits for Hunting Outfitters.

Based on the analysis, from a 2016 study led by a University of Maine Professor, hunting lodge permits have generated a statewide economic impact exceeding \$20 million. This revenue has supported rural infrastructure and funded tourism enhancements at sporting camps and within local communities. For perspective, over eight hundred lottery hunts would be required to match the economic contribution of the lodge tag program.

The program has positioned Maine as a nationally recognized hunting destination. The auction tag high bid has grown from \$16,000 to over \$30,000, with sustained interest from non-resident lottery applicants. Key elements contributing to the program's success include its adaptability, minimal bureaucracy, and client-centered approach. It should be noted that increased restrictions may reduce its effectiveness.

Collaboration among Hunting Outfitters is essential for delivering high-caliber hunting experiences. Such cooperation enables hosted hunts requiring multiple tags at a single location, exemplified by recent Cabela's Signature Visa hunts. It also facilitates group hunts, including those sponsored by corporations, and family hunts

such as father-son or grandparent-grandchild outings. In the absence of the lodge tag program and its inherent flexibility, these groups might have sought alternatives in Canada or Alaska.

The Amendment formalizes existing practices for swapping and deferring lodge tags without adding complexity to wildlife management or administrative procedures. These measures are critical for maintaining both flexibility and equitable opportunities for clients. Additionally, the ability to swap tags with general lottery allocations enables lodges to better accommodate client and operational requirements, thereby enhancing economic impact and supporting high-quality hunting experiences.

Given that lodge tags are independent of the general lottery system, the three-year waiting period for purchasing a lodge tag is no longer warranted. Originally, this waiting period was implemented to improve lottery applicant odds; therefore, related provisions concerning sub-permittee sales are also unnecessary.

A notable example occurred four years ago when 84-year-old Mary Cabela, spouse of Dick Cabela, successfully hunted a trophy moose in Northern Maine during a family visit. The life size moose mount is now displayed at the Cabela family museum in Nebraska, highlighting Maine's exemplary hunting opportunities. Without the lodge tag program, similar trophies would likely have originated from Newfoundland or Labrador.

In summary, the program generates substantial economic benefits for rural communities, stimulates tourism, and supports infrastructure development without cost to taxpayers. The proposed clarifications are expected to simplify processes for the Department and participating lodges.

Thank you.

Nathan Theriault owns OMM Outfitters, an education, entertainment, and hospitality company that offers top-tier outdoor adventures with a focus on exceptional service, quality, and attention to detail. OMM values ethics outdoors, including respect for wildlife, the environment, and landowners, and promotes principles such as honesty, integrity, perseverance, and commitment to family, faith, and country.