

Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Curry and Representative Gere. Distinguished members of the committees on Appropriations & Financial Affairs and Housing & Economic Development.

My name is Don Kleiner and I am a resident of Union. I am here today to oppose Part EE of LD 2212, the Supplemental Budget that moves \$700,000 from the Tourism Marketing and Promotion Fund.

I operate a guide service; Maine Outdoors in Union that gratefully enters it's 40th season this year. Over the years I have offered fishing on both fresh and saltwater; hunting and a variety of nature exploration trips.

I am amazed at what this has meant for me personally. Two sons through college, incidentally both operating guides service of their own, home paid for, not to mention being able to comfortably retire someday. I have literally thousands of happy clients who enjoyed millions of great Maine experiences all while maintaining the environment and character of our state. At the same time providing a contribution to the economy of my small rural community.

As you may have guessed, the vast majority of my clients come from around the country and indeed the world. Many are now regulars that I see every season including five families where I guide grandparents, parents and grandchildren. I know it is hard to imagine I am that old!

Attracting a clientele like that is not an easy feat and one that a business as small as mine with a minuscule marketing budget simply could not accomplish alone. The Tourism Marketing Fund was created in statute in 2001 to ensure a fraction of the industry-generated revenue is reinvested directly into tourism promotion to provide that support for my business and thousands of others like it.

Without that support for the Maine brand attracting folks from Boston, Alexandria, Atlanta, New Orleans and certainly London would be far out of my financial reach.

The Tourism Marketing Fund is generated from a fraction of the sales tax that my clients pay where they stay and on what they eat while they are here. By the way that tax is included on any meal that I serve in the field. That collectively generated funding source helps to make small businesses like mine viable because the state marketing program reaches the outside world to make them aware of us and great services we offer.

Taking any part of that funding from its intended purpose would certainly hinder those efforts going forward and make it that much more difficult for the generation coming behind me to enjoy the business conditions that have made my 40 year career possible, successful and enjoyable. I urge you to remove that redirection of the fund from the budget proposal before you.

Thank you very much for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.