



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
353 WATER STREET
41 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA ME 04333-0041



**Testimony of Timothy Peabody, Deputy Commissioner
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and
the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

"An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Timothy Peabody, and I am the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am here today to testify in support of the supplemental budget bill, LD 2212.

This is the final budget proposal from the Administration. The proposal delivers financial relief to Maine people, preserves programs lawmakers and Maine people support, and addresses some emergent issues, including impacts of new federal legislation. Governor Mills' guiding belief has always been that our strongest asset is the people of Maine and that's why this budget, like those in the past, seeks to invest in and support them. We look forward to working with the Legislature in the coming weeks to enact a balanced budget that supports Maine people and protects the fiscal health of our state.

ATV Safety and Educational Program 0559

The first Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-81** is the ATV Safety and Educational Program. This program ensures that persons aged ten to sixteen are in compliance with the law requiring them to complete a training program approved by the Department in order to operate such vehicles in the State of Maine. Recreational vehicle education programs are conducted to raise public awareness and promote better understanding of outdoor recreation safety issues and to encourage better support for recreational vehicle safety and enforcement efforts.

PHONE: (207) 287-8000

FISH AND WILDLIFE ON THE
WEB:
www.maine.gov/ifw

EMAIL ADDRESS:
ifw.webmaster@maine.gov

The only new initiative in this program is an adjustment to the Other Special Revenue, which is a percentage of the state gas tax distributed to the Department for ATV enforcement grants. This adjustment request was made by the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

Enforcement Operations – IF&W 0537

The next Budget Program presented on **page A-81** is the Enforcement Operations program. The Maine Warden Service enforces Title 12, Chapters 901-939, enforces all rules promulgated by the Commissioner, and enforces the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Maine Warden Service also enforces the Maine boating and recreational vehicle laws (snowmobile and ATV). The Maine Warden Service is, by statute, responsible for searches for persons presumed lost or drowned in the fields, forests and inland waters of the State of Maine. Game Wardens of the Maine Warden Service are uniformed law enforcement officers with full police powers and statewide jurisdiction.

The only new initiative in this program transfers \$163,446 in both FY26 and FY27 from the Enforcement Operations program to the Resource Management Wildlife program for wildlife conflict management. This program helps Maine residents reduce property damage from wildlife, assists with the surveillance of and response to wildlife diseases, and responds to public safety issues with wildlife. The management of the wildlife conflict staff has shifted from the Maine Warden Service to the Bureau of Resource Management and this initiative will transfer the funding to account for this change. This initiative can also be found on **page A-82** under the Resource Management Services program.

Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations 0535

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-81** is the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program. The Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program works to ensure that all species of inland fish in the State of Maine are maintained and perpetuated for their intrinsic, ecological and economic value. In addition, this program works to ensure that inland fisheries are available for recreational, scientific and educational use.

The only new initiative in this program allocates an additional \$250,000 in Other Special Revenue Funds in both FY26 and FY27 for fish hatchery maintenance and improvements. This initiative is linked to the **Part GGG** language portion of this budget on **page 72** which directs \$2 from each fishing license sold to be deposited into this Special Revenue Fund.

Public Information and Education Division 0729

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-82** is the Public Information and Education Division. The Public Information and Education Division administers

programs to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of inland fisheries and wildlife resources through public education, promotion, and dissemination of information.

The only new initiative in this program on **page A-82** increases General Fund appropriation by \$3,157 in FY27 and increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$1,626 in FY27 to reorganize one Public Relations Specialist position to a Marketing Specialist position. This initiative can also be found on **page A-82** under the Resource Management Services program.

Resource Management Services – IF&W 0534

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-82** is the Resource Management Services program. The Bureau of Resource Management is responsible for the management of the State's inland fisheries and wildlife resources and the development of rules governing the effective management of these resources. The Bureau maintains and enhances the State's fisheries and wildlife resources and habitats through acquisition and habitat improvement, manages wildlife sanctuaries and management areas, coordinates animal damage control functions and controls the importation and transportation of wildlife species and associated parasites and diseases within Maine.

There are two new initiatives in this program that are both complementary to entries that I discussed earlier in my testimony.

There are also two language parts in the Supplemental Budget pertaining to the Department. The first is **Part FFF on page 71**. This part further establishes the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Program to prioritize native inland fish conservation and the research, management and enhancement of the State's native fish. This language provides program direction to the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Fund that was established in the FY/26-27 Biennial Budget.

The second language piece, **Part GGG on page 72**, repeals the current Fish Hatchery Maintenance Fund and it replaces with the proposed new language. The new language provides authority for the Fund to pay for personal services overtime for fish stocking and other hatchery-related work when operationally required, in addition to providing maintenance funds for the Department's eight hatcheries, and support for the design of additional hatcheries in the state. This Part also authorizes \$2 from each fishing license sold to be deposited into the Fund.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.