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Board of Directors

Seth Sprague
President

LD 2217 “An Act Related to the Electronic Tagging of Deer”

Jennifer Dann
1st Vice-President

Testimony In Opposition To

Amanda Egan, Executive Director

March 2, 2026

Kyle Burdick
2nd Vice-President

Jeff Williams
Secretary

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Amanda Egan, Executive Director of Maine Woodland Owners, speaking today in opposition to LD 2217.

John Melrose
Treasurer

Maine Woodland Owners is a statewide nonprofit that advances stewardship of Maine’s small woodland resources through the encouragement of sustainable forest management, support for the state’s 86,000 small private woodland owners, and a land trust that conserves working forests.

Doug Baston

Hannah Carter

Jim Clair

Mark Doty

As this committee knows, Maine’s outdoor recreation and hunting heritage rely largely on the good faith and generosity of private landowners. However, that relationship requires reciprocity. The Maine Deer Management Fund was established with a specific, vital purpose: to manage our deer populations and, crucially, to assist landowners in dealing with the conflicts that arise from those populations.

Richard Nass

Mike Redante

Nicole Rogers

Paul Sampson

Jeff Tarling

LD 2217 proposes to remove funding that is currently earmarked to assist landowners with the prevention and management of landowner-deer conflicts. Deer populations, while a public resource, can create significant private costs, including damage to commercial seedlings, young forest stands, and expensive agricultural infrastructure. This fund provides a necessary tool for the State to help mitigate those damages. Removing this support leaves landowners to bear the costs of a public resource alone.

Chapter Leaders

Si Balch

Ernest Carle

Jennifer Dann

Eric Deschene

Jim Ferrante

Jason Hilton

Merle Ring

Andy Shultz

Maine’s private landowners currently receive little to no tangible benefit for making their land available for hunters or other public users. We do it because we value the tradition and the community. However, the assistance provided by the Deer Management Fund was a rare, meaningful bonus, a sign that the State recognizes the burden landowners carry. Removing this funding feels like a step backward, signaling to landowners that their contributions are taken for granted.

Andrew Smart

Jeff Williams

The Maine Deer Management Fund represents a commitment that the State will be a partner in managing the practical impacts of a public resource on private land. As currently written, the removal of landowner-deer conflict funding is the primary obstacle to our support for this bill. We urge the committee to maintain this essential partnership and vote **Ought Not to Pass** on LD 2217. At the very least, we ask that this funding be restored before the bill moves forward, so that landowners are not left to bear the costs of deer conflicts alone.

Thank you for your consideration.