



**Testimony of
Maine Wilderness Guides Organization**

on L.D. 125 –

**An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the
Purpose of Silviculture**

SUPPORT

March 2, 2021

Greetings Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and Members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee. I am Jeanne Christie, the President of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization (MWGO), and I am providing testimony in support of LD 125.

MWGO consists of over 90 registered Maine guides, sporting camp and lodge owners, and their supporters. Our mission is to provide a unified voice for the profession of wilderness guiding while maintaining the highest professional, educational, and stewardship standards for the conservation of remote woods and waters. We are dedicated to the protection of habitat and natural resources in the areas we guide in for our livelihoods, our clients, the fish and game we pursue, and for future generations.

Glyphosate is a widely used chemical herbicide and has been in use for decades, but science and information on the effects of glyphosate has only come to light in recent years. Research to date has demonstrated that glyphosate is harmful to human health and natural ecosystems.

The toxicity of glyphosate is well-established. The International Agency for Research on Cancer, which is part of the World Health Organization, classifies glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic." It has been linked to cases of non-Hodgkins lymphoma, cancer, and other diseases. Glyphosate is very pervasive and, in one study conducted in Canada, traces of it had been found on one-third of agricultural products tested. Glyphosate may also be promoting antibiotic resistance in soil microbiomes, which has public health implications. In fact, glyphosate has been banned in at least 20 countries and there have been numerous lawsuits in and outside of the U.S. alleging harm by producers of glyphosate-containing products.

Glyphosate also has negative ecological effects. Studies have shown that glyphosate adversely impacts pollinator insects, fishes, mollusks, amphibians, and algae. In 2020, a U.S. EPA Biological Evaluation assessing risks to listed species from labeled uses of glyphosate found that glyphosate could be impacting dozens of endangered plants and animals. It has also been shown that glyphosate impacts soil microbes, which are important for nutrient cycling and other ecological processes. All of these ecosystem impacts have the potential to cause economic damage to natural resource-based businesses, like guiding, as well.

As an organization of guides and related businesses, we are concerned about the wide use of glyphosate for our personal health, the health of our customers, and the health of the environment that supports our businesses. Aerially spraying can cause spray drift that gets onto neighboring farms, other non-target sites, and into water supplies, which can haphazardly expose people, fish, wildlife, and other organisms. Because we are out in the woods or on the water on a regular basis – possibly not far from forestry operations that apply glyphosate – we are at increased risk of exposure.

In some instances, the use of chemical herbicides may make sense in forestry or agricultural settings, but excessive and extensive use of these herbicides, including products containing glyphosate, is a public safety concern and an environmental hazard. Glyphosate should be used more discriminately, not by aerial spraying, if it must be used at all.

Based on the scientific literature and recent lawsuits, the application of glyphosate should be regulated in order to protect the public and the environment. We believe aerially spraying of glyphosate should be banned, and we respectfully ask the Committee to pass LD 125. Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.