



Maine Professional Guides Association

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Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and distinguished members of the committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry. My name is Don Kleiner, I live in Union and am the Executive Director of the Maine Professional Guides Association. The association represents roughly 1000 licensed guides throughout the state. Collectively our members offer almost any sort of guided outdoor experience you can imagine. We are proud of our quality outdoor experiences and our role in helping the states conservation efforts become an economic benefit for the primarily rural communities where we live.

I am also a working guide and have been since 1986 providing fishing trips in fresh and saltwater along with upland bird hunting trips over trained dogs. Nearly all of my guided hunting trips are now in a few unorganized townships in Penobscot and Aroostook counties. Which is to say I am very familiar with that part of our state and have been around long enough to notice how things have changed.

Forgive me for listening in during the hearing on LD 125 An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture and not testifying that day. I heard an implication during that hearing I would like to provide some context to. Namely that once treated in this way the habitat is no longer suitable for wildlife.

I wish to clarify that habitat is never fixed at a place rather it changes and evolves over time. Think of it as a garden on a much slower time scale. This is as true for the northern forest as any other habitat. Thinking of the habitat of in this case a forest as it exists today as an unchanging picture rather than a snapshot in time can lead to serious errors. What we see today will most certainly change in the next 20 years regardless of what we do.

Long ago I guided grouse and woodcock hunters in Waldo County. The popular writer Gene Letourneau also hunted in some of the same territory. I always saw him at a place I considered to have gone by long ago; the pines were now full grown and ready to be cut. One day he was sitting by the side of the road having lunch and I stopped to talk with him. When I asked why he hunted in a place that had clearly gone by and was no longer good grouse habitat he responded that it used to be one of his best covers. Almost like he did not realize it had changed. Fast forward 30 years and I recently found one of my favorite covers getting the big pine cut. At that moment I realized that I had made the same mistake that Gene had made many years before. What was once an open blueberry field with a few popple whips had grown completely to pine and that pine had grown to marketable size; while I watched but did not see. Change is

An organization of professional guides dedicated to promoting a quality, ethical outdoor experience.

happening to all habitats all of the time even if we do not notice. I learned about succession in college but apparently did not learn that it also was part of my world every day.

I want to be sure you are aware that wildlife does use those areas. I look for those areas as fall woodcock cover, they are at their best a few years after treatment. Before the softwoods grow tall enough to make them impossible for my hunters to shoot in but providing ample resting and feeding habitat. The birds are still in those areas for another few years after I stop hunting but you just cannot see them when they are in the air making the shooting impossible.

Lynx, a species endangered in other areas of the country, are abundant and expanding their range in Maine. Lynx are tied to the early successional habitat that allows hares to flourish. Current harvesting practices have favored hare and for me ruffed grouse. Making both species more successful than at any time in recent history. Keep in mind though that this is again a snapshot in time and not a permanent situation.

In conclusion I urge you to remember that the forest changes over time and certain species are favored at various points along that timeline. None of us can prevent this from happening.

Thank you for sparing me a few moments and I hope that this has been helpful for your deliberations. Please do not hesitate to e-mail or call if I can answer any questions.