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CAMDEN

I adamantly oppose LD 142, which would give the DIFW commissioner the authority to make changes in the bear trapping season and allow more bears to be hunted and killed. If the committee wishes to make such changes, they should present them before the legislature, rather than in a work session, so that the citizens of Maine have a chance to weigh in. Many citizens in this state object to current bear management practices, including trapping, baiting, and hounding, and would not rule out another referendum.

I know that the DIFW is concerned about the apparent increase in the bear population, but any legislation that alters current rules and regulations addressing bear management should wait until impartial, scientific studies are complete. According to many data, baiting/feeding may actually be increasing the bear population. DIFW needs to base its wildlife management policies on more than just killing animals. As of now, it appears that management practices are designed to benefit the hunters rather than the hunted. I admonish the committee to resoundingly reject LD 142.