

Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 142, "An Act To Give the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Rule-making Authority To Establish a Bear Season Framework and Bag Limits"

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My initial objection to LD 142 and its presentation by Representative John L. Martin is the possible conflict of interest in violation of Title 1, Chapter 25, Sec. 1014.1. which states in part, "A legislator engages in a violation of legislative ethics if that legislator votes on a question in connection with a conflict of interest in committee or in either body of the legislature or **attempts to influence the outcome of that question**.... A conflict of interest includes...(w)hen a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family has or acquires direct substantial personal financial interest, distinct from that of the general public, in an enterprise that would be financially benefited by proposed legislation...." Rep. John L. Martin is a Maine guide and member of the Maine Professional Guides Association according to the MPGA 2020 Member Directory, and he offers bear, deer, moose, and turkey hunting. Rep. John L. Martin is listed in the Moose Point Camps, Inc. State of Maine 2020 Annual Report as the president, treasurer, and sole shareholder of this "sporting camps" business. The Facebook page for Moose Point Camps shows a photo of a large bear feeding in a barrel of food and states, "All inclusive sporting camps, offering guided moose, deer, and bear hunts...."

This bill is intended to, and if enacted, will almost certainly increase revenue for Maine's bear hunting industry, of which Rep. John L. Martin is a part. These proceedings shed light on the longstanding incestuous nature of the relationship of Maine government with the hunting, fishing and trapping industries. I suggest that this bill be withdrawn.

Aside from the apparent conflict of interest, LD 142 is a bad bill for any number of reasons. These include:

- 1) This bill has no basis in science nor is any science cited to show the need for, or impact of, this bill.
- 2) This bill requires MDIFW to establish by rule a limit allowing hunters to kill up to two bears per calendar year. This is double the current limit. There is no rationale cited for this increase.
- 3) This bill contains no additional limits on the feeding of bears and no recognition of the impacts of bear feeding on bear reproduction and population growth.
- 4) This bill expands the bear hunting season, including with dogs, by one week on the front end.
- 5) MDIFW's rule-making process and the process for selecting members to the Advisory Council are both corrupt and undemocratic. By shifting responsibility for establishing killing limits for bear hunters to MDIFW, the legislature is effectively shutting out the people of Maine from the fish and wildlife management process. Unless and until the MDIFW's processes and procedures are reformed, responsibility for establishing limits for killing bears should remain with the legislature.
- 6) This bill focuses solely on the killing of bears. It fails to address the simple scientific fact that feeding bears produces more bears. MDIFW has been aware for many years that cub production has increased since bear feeding became widespread. It is past time for the Maine legislature to enact fish and wildlife laws based on science rather than on money and politics.

Thank you.