

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and distinguished IF&W committee members,

I am Agnes Connors of Standish and I am testifying today in support of LD 394, as amended by Richard Wiggin.

I am a boat owner and love cruising and water skiing on my lake. This legislation in no way impacts those activities. My family and I are outdoor adventurers who do a lot of hiking, boating, and enjoying of the beautiful nature in Maine. We support fishing and gaming.

I would like to make the distinction between recreational boating and boat racing.

Recreational boating, including most water-skiing, is typically done at speeds from 10 – 30 mph. Recreational boaters are usually on the lookout for wildlife and are aware of other boaters and are likely to take evasive action to avoid coming close.

By contrast, boat racing reaches speeds of 70+ mph, with boats typically four abreast. With a laser-focus on gaining an edge on the boats next to them, boat racers are largely oblivious to wildlife hazards around them, and at the speeds they travel there is not a chance of swerving to avoid wildlife.

This amended bill will allow the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) to fulfill its mission to protect Maine's fish and wildlife and their habitats by safely connecting people with nature through responsible recreation, sport, and science.

Today the MDIFW Commissioner does not have the authority to consider wildlife impacts in issuing a boat race permit. This bill will provide MDIFW with needed authority to ensure that boat races are held in a manner not to endanger wildlife.

Before closing I would like to thank Representative Ordway for submitting this bill and for his help and support.

I urge you to support LD 394.

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