

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

In Support of

LD 394

**“An Act To Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife in the Issuance of a Permit
To Hold a Regatta, Race or Boat or Water-ski Exhibition”**

Presented by Representative ORDWAY of Standish.

DATE OF HEARING: March 1, 2021

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Tim Peabody, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **L.D. 394.**

This bill requires a person obtaining a permit to hold a regatta, race, boat exhibition or water ski exhibition to provide protection, as prescribed by the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, for wildlife, wildlife habitat and water quality.

Current law requires persons who wish to hold a regatta, race, boat exhibition or water ski exhibition to apply for a permit from the Department. To summarize the application process, you must apply in writing 15 days in advance with the date, time, and location of the event. For a proposed race the applicant must send a letter of intent 60 days prior to the race to municipal officers in the area where the race will occur. A copy of such letter must accompany the application to the Department.

Upon receipt of completed applications the permits granted by the Department have the following requirements in statute:

1. Permit holder shall provide reasonable protection as prescribed by the Commissioner, from water traffic interference and hazards and shall take reasonable precautions to safeguard persons and property.
2. Officials conducting the event shall display one or more 4X4 orange warning flags while the event is in progress

The Department supports the language proposed in LD 394 as it provides additional statutory requirements directly related to the protection of wildlife, wildlife habitat and water quality for persons who choose to have permitted events described above. If passed

it would provide clarity surrounding the Commissioner's authority to place specific permit conditions for a boat race event.

We thank Representative Ordway for bringing this bill on behalf of constituents in his district. They are primarily residents around Watchic Lake in York County where they have a concern for the resident loon population and racing events on the lake.

There is a current statute against harassing wildlife with a watercraft. But the Department feels that having the proposed language in this bill would be a proactive approach to the concerns rather than a direct enforcement action against an event coordinator and/or boat operator for harassing wildlife.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.