

Testimony for LD 544  
Dave Kelso  
South Paris, Maine

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and other distinguished members of the Committee.

My name is Dave Kelso. I am here to speak in favor of LD 544, "An act to abolish the moose permits for hunting lodges. This was submitted by my Legislative Representative John Andrews at my request.

When the bill to give out permits to Title 22 licensed lodges was first being considered, I was approached by one of the lobbyists to support the bill. After reading it and hearing what they wanted to do, I said no. It is not fair. You are pitting the haves and the have nots against each other, not to mention alienating resident and non-resident hunters who have been applying for years to draw a tag. Now a select few get to make some pretty big profits, if they, as owners of Title 22 licensed lodges, are given permits. Not Fair!

I have made lots of friends since moving to South Paris. One is the owner of a Title 22 licensed establishment. He was approached by a Title 22 licensed establishment and guide from Northern Maine. This guide said, "Apply for the permit. If you are drawn, I will pay the \$1500 for the tag and give you \$2000". The owner of the South Paris establishment came to me and asked me if this was legal? I explained technically no. The permit is only allowed to exchange hands one time. With that offer it would make it two times. I told him what he could do was hire the guide if he got drawn and work with the guide to sell the permit as the guide probably had a list of potential buyers.

I went on further to explain that the hunts have been selling for \$9000 to \$20,000. He wanted to know if he could team with me and apply and split the money if he was to get drawn. Now I am no longer a guide for personal reasons. So I told him no. But he thought only being offered \$2000 was a little on the light side if what worth the \$20,000. I agreed with him and told him to walk away from the offer.

There are countless stories of this happening. There are more loopholes in the current system. Last year two establishments got tags. Both were Title 22 inspected but only as rentals. They got around the meals part somehow. One I know got a permit and there is no way he could even get a Title 22 license for rental only. I know because I use to manage this lodge.

Now, you have lodges getting permits in zones that they cannot conceivably guide out of their lodges. I know two in zone 7 this year that got drawn for zone 1. So they are doing tent hunts. Great and good for them. But where is the Title 22 endorsement for a tent hunt? Colorado has an endorsement for tent hunts, we don't in Maine. I have four friends that run tent camps in North Maine Woods, and they can't apply for these permits. Someone needs to explain what is going on with that.

One argument I hear from the lodge owners that benefit from these permits is, "I need the money to keep my lodge operating". This is a lottery. If you don't get a permit one year, are you closing the doors? Highly doubt it. If that is how you run a business, head to Las Vegas. This is a money grab for "haves" that leaves the "have nots" out in the cold. Just like the last bill I submitted you all sat here and listened to, you have to own something in order to be allowed to make more money. While those that could also benefit from an influx of money are left to sit out in the cold. Not exactly fair for all Maine People now is it.

I know this is a money grab for IF&W and I get that. But the previous bill I submitted could be an even bigger money grab. IF&W allows the changing on sub-permittees 30 days prior to hunt. Yet an IF&W employee said it would create more work. Ya , permits are being sold. You allow a few select people to capitalize on this issue above board. Not exactly fair in my eyes.

I have no dog in this fight. I gave up my guide license as stated before. I am doing this for friends that I trained to hunt moose as far back the 1990's that are still doing it today.

I sincerely hope you will either hear my next bill or I can withdraw it if you end this "Lodge moose permit" hunt

I would like to thank the committee for your time in hearing this proposed bill. I hope if this makes it to a work session I can be included.

Again, thank you all for your time.

Dave Kelso