



Maine Professional Guides Association

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Testimony of Don Kleiner Executive Director Opposing LD 544 An Act To Eliminate Moose Permits for Hunting Lodges

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Don Kleiner, I live in Union and am the Executive Director of the Maine Professional Guides Association. Here this morning on behalf of the roughly 1000 members of our association.

Full disclosure: we did not support this idea when it was first proposed and warmed to it enough to be neutral when it was enacted a few years ago. Many of the issues we raised when the idea first was discussed have come to reality.

However, the situation has changed for all of us including the lodges and sporting camps. Many of them were closed completely for at least part of the season last year. The economic supports intended to help small businesses simply did not offer much if any help to those of us in outdoor recreation. Businesses like our members have, simply do not fit into neat boxes of the sort that bureaucratic institutions need to have presented to them. Really no surprise to anyone I suppose.

Today we believe that despite the many issues this law has presented, and I am sure you are aware of at least a few of them. Both administratively for the department and in how the free market has worked. This system is working exactly as the committee intended. Lodges are getting permits and able to sell them to increase their bottom lines in a difficult economic period. By the way hiring guides to provide the hunts associated with those permits.

I am sure that in a few cases the extra income has made the difference that kept someone in business. Having listened to the discussion and deliberation that went into the current law over the years, I must confess that you constructed something that delivers exactly the economic support you intended exactly where it was intended.

We think that making any change to the system at this moment is simply unwise and urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 544.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

An organization of professional guides dedicated to promoting a quality, ethical outdoor experience.