

## **Maine Sporting Camp Association (MSCA)**

126 Western Avenue, Box 153 \* Augusta, Maine 04330 \* 207-888-3931

---

### **Testimony in Opposition of LD 544**

#### **An Act to Eliminate Moose Permits for Hunting Lodges to The Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW)**

**March 15, 2021**

Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), my name is Matt Libby and I am a member of the Maine Sporting Camp Association (MSCA) and operator of Libby Outposts. The MSCA represents almost 50 sporting lodges from the Rangeley Lakes Region to Lubec and from Belgrade to Allagash. More locations in Maine than Hilton or Marriott.

With over 1,000 beds, licensed Maine Sporting Camps have a significant investment in rural communities, employ many full and part time people, and are faced with high standards and health regulations for eating and lodging facilities. To maintain Maine's outdoor traditions, Sporting Camps need revenues to meet these demands plus make needed improvements - now even more important because of the economic burden on the rural tourism infrastructure because of COVID.

The MSCA opposes L.D. 544 for the following reasons:

1. The Lodge Tag Program is new and needs time to mature.
2. The Law is very inclusive with benefits to all Maine residents by creating a dramatic increase in sales tax revenues and economic stimulus. Shouldn't non-hunters benefit financially from Maine's hunting economy? All lodge tags issued come from the non-resident pool and represent just 2% of tags issued – a reasonable balance. Maine hunters are not losing tags.
3. The program is designed to showcase Maine's "World Class" hunting opportunities and bring people to Maine to enjoy all that it has to offer. It is working. The availability of tags has allowed production of multiple national television hunting episodes. The value of Maine moose hunting, and Maine's wilderness will have a big

audience.

4. The rural community economic benefits are material. According to our analysis, the Department would have to issue over 600 more lottery tags to have the same economic impact as just the 62 to be issued in 2021. *(The estimate is derived by interpolating a 2017 University of Maine Professor's economic impact study on the topic.)* Small numbers, yet big results and a dramatic illustration of why, from an economic impact alone, the program should be kept – even expanded.

Some may incorrectly argue lodge tags violate The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation as promoted by Teddy Roosevelt and Sen. John F. Lacey the author of the Lacey Act and in their words, “commercialize” moose hunting. But the Act banned trafficking of wild game meat, ending wild game slaughter and meat sales in restaurants and grocery stores. Moreover, the Model is a compilation of abstract principles now mis-used by anti-hunters and fair-chase idealists. Some say even the use of guides, guns, crossbows, Google Earth, and GPS should be prohibited. The Model is not at odds with the provisions for lodge tags. Such tags are commonly used in other states and countries to help sustain wildlife conservation, access, and hunting traditions.

The MSCA urges you to oppose the Bill.

Thank you.

*The Maine Sporting Camp Association (MSCA) was founded in 1987 by a group of camp owners to preserve the sporting camp's uniqueness in the State of Maine. By working closely with other groups and exchanging ideas and information, the members of MSCA continue the tradition of providing high quality recreational experiences to individuals and their families, a quality experience that visitors will remember long after they return home. The MSCA is a 501C (6) non-profit organization that is led by a board of directors. **Maine Sporting Camp Association** 126 Western Avenue, Box 153, Augusta, Maine 04330, Phone: (207) 888-3931 Email: [info@mainesportingcamps.com](mailto:info@mainesportingcamps.com); Website: [www.mainesportingcamps.com](http://www.mainesportingcamps.com)*