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Testimony in Opposition to LD 544  
“An Act to Eliminate Moose Permits for Hunting Lodges”

March 15, 2021

Sen. Dill, Rep. Landry and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Guy Randlett, I live in Southport, Maine and have been an active Registered Maine Hunting Guide for over 25 years, concentrating my efforts on learning as much as I can about the lives and habits of our great moose. I appreciate your taking the time to listen to my testimony AGAINST LD 544 and hope you will give strong consideration to what I have to say.

I do not nor ever have owned any sort of hunting lodge. I have worked out of several different hunting lodges for the span of my moose hunt guiding career.

When this proposal to offer moose hunting permits to qualifying sporting camps was initiated four or five years ago, I testified in favor of it.

If you refer back to the talking points made by proponents of lodge moose tags back in 2017, you will see that this program has lived up to everything and more than anticipated. Most significantly:

1. Greatly increased revenue generated by these moose tags for I.F. & W.
2. Increased revenue for qualified sporting camps with which to make capital improvements on their facilities, thus making for a much better overall experience for the non-resident hunters that purchase the requisite permit/guided hunt and American Plan lodging.
3. It has had no effect on the number of tags awarded to Maine Residents. These tags come out of the Non-Resident (NR) pool of tags, and leave plenty more of NR tags for guides and outfits to compete for in the June lottery drawing.
4. Guides that do own a qualifying lodge certainly benefit, but many unaffiliated and independent guides are employed as well through this program. Not to mention cooks, general camp help, butchers, and in some cases videographers that are hired on for the hunt.

5. The best guides get hired, which greatly enhances the experience for the hunter. I sense that some guides with mediocre reputations are amongst those that do not like this program.

I personally have worked on one such a hunt. I had never previously worked for this lodge, I was hired by by reputation. The client was an 83 year old woman from the midwest who had dreamed about bagging a trophy Maine bull moose. Short of the existing lodge permit program she likely would not have had the opportunity.

I was the head guide for her hunt, two other unaffiliated guides were hired by the lodge to work with me. A videographer was hired to film all aspects of her hunt. All four of us were well paid. It was a very enjoyable week of hunting for all involved that culminated in the huntress bagging a beautiful 9 1/2 year old bull with 22 antler points and a 56" spread. On foot one mile into the woods no less!

The camp we all stayed at that was fortunate enough to receive the special hunting lodge permit had been made obvious improvements in the year prior this hunt. A new back up generator, and an extensively updated cabin interior with new sills stick out in my mind. A local contractor was hired to do this. Similar capital improvements to sporting camps is one of the great goals of this program. Many qualifying sporting lodges can benefit accordingly, thus guaranteeing a much better overall experience for all their customers, not just moose hunters, but others hunters, fishers, birders, artists, and nature lovers.

I ask that you please vote AGAINST LD 544. The only change I could suggest be to keep it as it is but add more tags available for QUALIFYING SPORTING CAMPS.

Please consider my words here. I will entertain any questions you may have, and thank you again. Sincerely, Guy Randlett