



Senator Jim Dill
Representative Scott Landry
Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
April 6, 2021

Dear Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the IF&W committee,

Please accept this letter in opposition to LD 1012, An Act to Fund Wildlife Rehabilitators.

AMC is the nation's oldest conservation, recreation, and education organization, with the mission to foster the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors. We have 6,500 members in Maine, and own 75,000 acres of forestland in the 100-Mile Wilderness region of Piscataquis County, managed for multiple use including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and environmental education. Among the most exciting aspects of our work is the watershed restoration that has brought Atlantic Salmon back to their traditional headwaters in the middle branch of the Pleasant River for the first time in more than a century.

While we appreciate the work done by wildlife rehabilitators, we cannot support the diversion of Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund resources away from current essential uses. Specifically, LD 1012 would reduce the share of MOHF funds available for fisheries and wildlife and habitat conservation projects and for endangered and threatened species conservation projects.

As laid out in Maine's climate action plan, conserving natural and working lands produces multiple benefits. Those include not only continued carbon storage but also ensuring the diversity of habitat and ecosystems that will help humans, plants, and animals adapt to a warming climate.

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund was created 25 years ago to generate additional resources for several chronically underfunded purposes. In the intervening years, resources have shrunk as lottery ticket sales have fallen off. Given the decline in revenues to the MOHF, we believe the current distribution of funding among categories is the right one and we urge you to prioritize the conservation of habitat and of populations of endangered and threatened species over the rehabilitation of individual creatures. After all, rehabilitated birds and animals require habitat to survive.

We recommend that you vote ought not to pass.

Sincerely,

Eliza Townsend
Maine Conservation Policy Director