

Tammy Cloutier
Kennebunk

Dear Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

I am writing to oppose LD 1212 An Act to Allow Sunday Hunting North of US Route 2 from the New Hampshire Border to Bangor, North of Route 9 from Bangor to the Canadian Border and within That Portion of the White Mountain National Forest inside the State.

Hunting on Sundays in Maine has been prohibited since the 1800s. Despite multiple attempts to overturn this, and complaints about it being an "antiquated blue law," Maine citizens have repeatedly stated their opposition to Sunday hunting. Yet here we are again with three proposals that seek to undermine the will of Maine's people.

I have heard and read multiple arguments about why Sunday hunting should be allowed; some of which include hunter recruitment, an increase in hunting opportunities and access to land, and an increase in revenue for our state. Consider the following:

- Participation in consumptive activities such as hunting is declining throughout the US, not just Maine. Rather than focus time and money on hunter recruitment, consider alternative options for spending our tax dollars and supporting our state's fish and wildlife agency.
- Sunday hunting may open an additional day for this activity, but not necessarily additional access to land that is currently inaccessible. There are many reasons why more and more people are posting their land, some of which include irresponsible hunters. While I choose to believe most hunters are ethical and responsible, that may not be enough of a reason for landowners to allow friends and/or strangers to hunt on their land – regardless of what day it is. Perhaps we should ask why so many people are posting their land in the first place.
- Our citizens, businesses, MDIFW, etc. are always in need of additional revenue. However, I return again to the fact that participation in consumptive activities such as hunting are declining. Maine's citizens are resilient and creative. We have lived without Sunday hunting for over 100 years and can continue to find ways to increase revenues without sacrificing our hunting-free Sundays.

Finally, in response to a statement that hunters contribute to conservation of our natural resources so they should be heard and allowed this "extra" day, I say, yes, a portion of their spending supports wildlife management programs, but that should not give a minority more of a voice than the majority. Yes, fish and wildlife agencies rely on funds obtained from hunting/fishing licenses, excise taxes on associated equipment, and boat fuel. HOWEVER, that is because our current system is designed to favor consumptive users. This has, in fact, resulted in a bias that allows a declining population (i.e., hunters) - as well as special interest groups such as the NRA and SAM - to dictate how OUR natural resources are managed. So again, with non-consumptive users increasingly overshadowing consumptive users by participating in nature related activities that do NOT include hunting, we need to look at changing the current revenue generating system rather than focusing on allowing Sunday hunting.

On a personal note ,my family and friends who are hunters have always been against Sunday hunting. This not only allows the hunted animals a day of rest, but allows those who enjoy being in the outdoors to "let down our guard" so to speak, for at least one day of the week during the multiple hunting seasons. It's one thing to hear a neighbor target shoot throughout the day on Sundays, it's quite another to have to be on the lookout for wildlife and hunters while trying to enjoy recreational activities outside.

I urge you to oppose LD 1212 An Act to Allow Sunday Hunting North of US Route 2 from the New Hampshire Border to Bangor, North of Route 9 from Bangor to the Canadian Border and within That Portion of the White Mountain National Forest inside the State.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Tammy Cloutier, PhD
Ethologist, Author
Kennebunk, Maine