



Maine Professional Guides Association

55 Morrison Hill Road
Wilton, ME 04294

www.maine-guides.org

Opposing LD 1033, 1054 and 1212 Allowing Hunting on Sundays

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am Don Kleiner I live in Union and am representing roughly 1000 guide members.

We are all proud of the success of The North American Model of Conservation that manages our wildlife resources using a scientific understanding of fish and wildlife populations that is funded by user fees. An important commitment made over 100 years ago. Keep in mind that that our forebearers rejected the European model which had fish and wildlife owned by the landowner. In England a common person could be put to death for taking a hare that belonged to the Lord of the Manor. Our system has fish and wildlife resources as an asset for all of us.

We must all be aware of the inherent conflict in that Model and that is that while our fish wildlife belongs to everyone. Fish live in waters owned by all of us; but wildlife lives on someone's land and has an impact there. This concept framed during colonial times separated out the land and the fish and wildlife. Making our relationship with those who do own the land critical to maintaining our rich outdoor heritage into the future.

We in Maine have been fortunate as open land access has become the rule to be sure we are the envy of the country for that. Why we want to be like the other states on this is puzzling at best. To make sure that tradition continues this legislature has gone to great lengths. By protecting landowners from liability when we all use their land free of charge. By providing an extensive Landowner Relations program that takes on issues like illegal dumping and trespass frequently at the individual landowner level. This has not gone unnoticed by the landowners that we all depend on for access to our resources that live on their land.

Other states have an access by permission only scheme that we refer to as reverse posting and most sportsman and women in the state have long opposed. You see elements of that in two of the bills before you. Many of those states have also developed a system of hunting leases where access is charged for by the landowner also a direction, we would rather not go and the legislature has agreed in the past.

As you have heard today landowners statewide are mostly against allowing the use of their land seven days a week feeling that having us as their guests six days a week should be enough. After careful consideration our board of directors decided that maintaining the current situation on land access is more important than adding another day to the hunting week.

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

Additionally changing from our current system of open access to one where hunting is allowed on only certain parcels is a sure problem. For hunters, landowners and law enforcement. A small example: my land backs up to a landlocked parcel. The boundary while marked by pins at the corners is not marked in any way beyond the stonewall that is sort of visible for the first hundred feet or so from the easterly corner. If the owner of the parcel behind me gives permission to hunters on Sunday does that mean that I must provide access across my land? How exactly will those hunters know when they are on my land or my neighbors? If I have not given permission to hunt on Sunday does that make a hunter walking in to the back lot on Sunday a trespasser if the gun is loaded? Or if she shoots at a bird flying across my land? Trespass is a significant crime and I urge great caution on setting hunters up to inadvertently trespass.

It is not that our members don't want additional business, we certainly do. An extra day a week needs to be carefully weighed against the prospect of shorter seasons. We all want to maintain healthy wildlife populations and an extra weekend day will sure result in higher harvests. That will lead successful management to lessen effort. Shorter seasons are certain to result from opening hunting on Sundays. Specifically, migratory bird seasons and in my case more specifically woodcock. Maine currently is allowed by the Flyway Council to add the days that we do not allow hunting on to the length of the season. Allowing me to book hunters for a six-week season. A shorter season will allow less time for my dogs to earn their feed. Duck seasons will also be shortened under the same logic. This will come on top of what we are hearing now is the loss of the special sea duck season that will already have a significant impact on many member businesses.

For the above reasons, I encourage you to not support Sunday hunting in any form. Thank you very much for your consideration in this discussion. I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.