

Eagle Lake Wild Game Processing & OMM Outfitters (OMM)

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Testimony in Support of LD 1213

An Act to Provide the Option of Online or Telephonic Tagging of Harvested Big Game Animals

to

The Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW)

April 21, 2021

Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), my name is Nathan Theriault, owner of Eagle Lake Wild Game Processing and OMM Outfitters testifying in support of the telephonic and electronic tagging option.

This bill does not propose eliminating the corner store tagging station. It simply adds another option. Maine's biologists have all year to study moose. Many hunters have less than a week to enjoy the woods of Maine. It would be nice to figure out a way around wasting a day driving miles and miles to tag an animal.

Eagle Lake Wild Game Processing handles over 100 harvested bear and moose with a staff of 5 – 10 from the end of August to mid-November. We could likely handle more animals with the same staff if this bill becomes reality.

For example, by keeping butchers at their cutting station rather than deflected to the refer trailer loading, unloading, and reloading quarters of moose arriving after tagging stations closed, they could be busy earning revenue from processing 5 to 10 more moose. In 2020, at least a dozen quartered moose encountered this wasteful process which introduces unnecessary risks from lifting, cross-contamination, and temperature compromise. Also, the COVID exposure opportunities increase.

During bear season, OMM loses revenues from guiding muskie trips, goose hunts, fishing trips, boat rentals, and maybe someday from a second bear hunt because

hunters are wasting almost a day traveling to the tagging station and butcher shop. Guides doing the transport could otherwise be checking game cameras, refreshing bait, or catching up on sleep since sometimes tracking wounded animals can extend past midnight. Further, the butcher shop could receive the harvested bears at its convenience, between shifts and when properly staffed.

Lastly, guides and hunters too are forced to travel hundreds of unnecessary miles to present animals at tagging stations. Good guides and butchers are hard to find so their time should not be wasted during the few urgent weeks of hunting season.

Many states are making telephonic and electronic tagging work. I think we could get there in Maine if this is made a priority. Designed properly the system could provide benefits to all, including the Department.

Thank you,

Nathan Theriault

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Dedicated to helping clients make great memories and meet and exceed their life-time goals, OMM Outfitters is an education, entertainment, and hospitality company. Providing extraordinary outdoor adventures including great service, world-class outfitter standards, attention to details, high quality, even perfection in every aspect including the food and lodging are the focus. All with a smile! Our enthusiastic staff love the outdoors and wildlife and are goal focused as we energize and guide clients to their desired outcome. But we also adhere to and share the ethical traditions of the outdoors including the respect for wildlife, the environment, and landowners. Engrained values like, constant learning, honesty, integrity, commitment, perseverance, love for God, family, and country are believed and taught to achieve our mission.