

Joel Vail
Dover-Foxcroft

Senators, Legislators, and Members of the IFW Committee,
Thank you for taking the time to hear my support of LD 1033. I understand there are many voicing concerns to shoot down this attempt to allow some forms of hunting on Sundays. I am also aware that various attempts to do similar have failed over the years. It is time to stop living in the past. Our state needs to allow more time for our hard working residents to hunt and provide for their families. To allow guide services to flexibility to offer better hunting options on private or leased property - helping to raise taxes for those areas and bring in more income.

The notion that allowing hunting on private property will endanger others is false. Being afraid of firearms is a personal problem and it is not fair to have peoples fears of firearms forced on others through legislation.

We are discussing private property. That means an agreement between the hunters and the landowner needs to be drawn and respected. Landowners can decide what type of hunting is allowed based on their preference. If they don't want hounds, then no hounds. If they only want upland bird hunting - then its only upland bird hunting.

Hunters, Guides etc - who follow the law and respect others will not abuse this privilege. Similar to hikers who use our trail systems and do a great job respecting nature. Are there people who will abuse this change? Of course. Those types of people never go away. But I can tell you that when you work 40+ hours per week, it is saddening to realize you get 1 day a week to hunt IF you have a M-F schedule that allows it. How many families rely on wild game to supplement their stocks for the winter? I know MANY that do and struggle to gather the meat they need due to working constantly. And why are Sundays off limits? It is not about safety - its about old religious laws that have no relevance today. Why do I say that? Because if you honestly have faith in a religion, than you follow it and don't impose it on others. That means those who don't want to hunt or work on Sundays - WONT do it anyways.

It is also worth mentioning that COVID-19 has dramatically altered how our economies and towns are surviving. Being outdoors and hunting/fishing etc is recommended as a form of social distancing! This gets people outdoors more often and hopefully helps increase some money coming into our communities through reservations, food, groceries and more.

Our guide service is fortunate that we have access via paid lease and purchase of vast areas of land. We still have people poach our areas, cause issues with the land owners and more. How do we handle it? We fix the problems ourselves and report things to the game wardens. It costs us more out of pocket to fix damaged equipment, fences, etc - on the leased land. But we do it because we RESPECT the people allowing us the opportunity to operate on their land.

As for impact on wildlife - we aren't meeting the goals put out but IFW for big game hunting. And "sport" hunting of coyotes has only helped improve deer herds in areas where they have been tracking such things. Given the numbers posted, adding Sundays to land owner hunting is not going to cause a sudden surge in animals being taken that somehow upsets the balance in our woods. Anyone who actually spends time in the great north woods, and works with these animals knows intimately how they function and how they have been growing or adapting. I was sitting on a ATV and had a fawn run directly in front of me being chased by 4 LARGE coyotes. 10 minutes later the mother came looking for that fawn. Despite my best attempts I was not able to save the fawn. The coyotes had no fear of me, or my machine. They are predators that do more damage to our deer populations than hunting. As anyone with areal world knowledge and common sense understands, BALANCE is important with our wildlife populations. And coyotes, destroy that balance. I know most hunters would enjoy having another day to kill coyotes that are hurting the populations in their areas. Especially since it is LANDOWNER permission only. Many of these people are farmers trying to protect their livestock and the animals nearby.

So, after all of this, I hope you understand why I feel LD 1033 should be approved and supported. I feel it is based on common sense from those who are involved in our woods and what families/communities need.