



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 1965

*An Act to Create Higher Standards for State-owned and
State-managed Land for Deer Management*

February 28, 2022

Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, I am Bill Patterson, and I am the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am speaking today neither for nor against LD 1965, *An Act to Create Higher Standards for State-owned and State-managed Land for Deer Management*.

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208 and would create higher standards for state-owned and state-managed land for the purpose of deer management. The Department will need more information on the intent and scope of this bill before we can determine our position or provide additional information to the Committee. However, as the Committee considers this bill, I would like to provide some context and background on forest management on Public Lands in Maine.

BPL manages approximately 635,700 acres of Public Reserved and Nonreserved lands across Maine. According to statute, these lands must be managed “*to demonstrate exemplary land management practices, including silvicultural, wildlife, and recreation management practices, as a demonstration of state policies governing management of forested and related types of lands.*” [12 M.R.S.A. §1847(1)]

Several practices are in place to promote and ensure compliance with BPL’s mandate to manage forests for a balance of forest products, wildlife, and recreation. First, this oversight includes detailed annual reporting to the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee of the Legislature. Second, a Silvicultural Advisory Committee consisting of leading scientists and experts in silviculture and wildlife management meets annually with our staff on a two-day site visit to review planned and recent BPL harvest activity. Third, all Public Land management plans are developed with multiple opportunities for public review and input. Finally, BPL maintains independent third-party certification under both the Forest Stewardship Council® as

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well as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®, both of which include rigorous annual desk and field audits, including stakeholder input. With careful forest management and significant areas set aside for Deer Wintering Areas and Ecological Reserves, Public Lands are managed to very high standards for multiple-use forest land in Maine.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.