

Eagle Lake Wild Game Processing & OMM Outfitters (OMM)

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Testimony in Support of L.D. 1991

An Act related to the Electronic Tagging of Big Game to

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

February 28, 2022

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 eliminate driving hours and hours 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 bounced 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 and 2021, 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 misses revenues from guiding muskie trips, goose hunts, fishing trips, and boat rentals because hunters are losing almost a day

traveling to the tagging station and butcher shop. This driving is more than “inconvenient” as one person suggested. 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.

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.

Lastly, during the discussion on L.D. 1213, last year there was interest in wild game processing facilities, hunting outfitters and other appropriate hunting related businesses to apply to be selected as registration agents. If the authority did not mandate serving walk-in traffic, it would help solve the travel problem and open the door to an expanded working relationship of the Department in the community.

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.