

Testimony on LD 1991 HP1477 An Act Related to the Electronic Registration and Tagging of Big Game

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Dana Valleau. I grew up in Orono, Maine and graduated from the University of Maine with a degree in Wildlife Management, and am a Certified Wildlife Biologist, which is an international certification administered by The Wildlife Society. I am also a Master Registered Maine Guide. I would like to offer testimony in support of LD 1991.

Wildlife management in Maine has a long and storied history and the State has done an excellent job of managing our valuable wildlife resources. Big game species populations and big game hunting are in particularly good shape and we have our skilled biologists to thank for a lot of those species' successes.

Part of wildlife management is collection of data on the animals of interest. Typically, wildlife managers do not handle or examine every animal in a population or that have been harvested. What is typical is studying a sample, that is using a ratio of a population to make management decisions. A foundation of modern wildlife management is the use of statistics to determine adequate sample sizes to support management decisions. Some examples of sampling used in current wildlife management in Maine include radio telemetry studies to determine mortality rates for moose calves, capturing and banding wild turkeys to estimate population size through recovery of bands, and examining a portion of the annual white-tailed deer harvest (typically about one quarter) to collect data such as age and body and antler size as indices of population size and health. Our biologists can use a sample of each of these species as an indicator for the total population they are managing, and it has proven effective. These are just a few examples of effective management that has been done without complete or large samples.

I believe that implementing electronic tagging as an option will be a benefit to the Department and the citizens of Maine. The Department will be able to spend less resources on the current standard of all animals being presented in person at a tagging station. The Department can utilize the wealth of data they already possess to estimate the sample size or number of animals that need to be sampled to provide adequate data for management decisions, and there can be mechanisms put into place to ensure they get the sample needed. Maine citizens can have the flexibility to focus their attention on taking care of the animal they have harvested and will not have an issue with finding an open tagging station in a timely manner.

Much of the management decisions leading up to the wealth of wildlife resources we have today relied on samples, and I believe at its very least, electronic tagging will not hinder the successes we have seen in managing our big game animals.

I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you.

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