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***Testimony of Senator Donna Bailey introducing***  
**LD 139, Resolve, Directing the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to**  
**Establish a Pilot Program for the Electronic Tagging of Deer**  
***Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife***  
**Monday, January 27, 2025**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Donna Bailey, and I proudly represent Senate District 31, which includes Buxton, Old Orchard Beach, and Saco. Today I am pleased to introduce my bill [LD 139](#), “Resolve, Directing the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to Establish a Pilot Program for the Electronic Tagging of Deer.”

Last year, one of my constituents, Roger Chisholm, contacted me and shared some ideas with me. Roger is an avid hunter who wants to start an electronic deer tagging program in Maine – similar to the one in New Hampshire.

I hope that Roger will be able to share his thoughts directly with you; but, in case he’s not, I’ll summarize them here. Roger told me that field tagging would be easier for hunters: they wouldn’t have to drive long distances to tagging stations where they often have to wait in long lines.

After I heard from Roger and listened to his thoughts, I met with Nathan Webb, who is the Wildlife Division Director at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. As someone who is not an expert in this field, I am grateful to Nathan for explaining how tagging works in Maine, as well as some of the legislative history behind this idea. I learned a lot.

As some of you might recall, the Committee has examined this proposal in the past. A few years ago, the Legislature commissioned a report to study the possibility of self-registration of deer. From that report, the Department made self-registration available for turkey. According to Nathan, it’s been successful and well-received.

When it comes to deer, I got the sense that the Department seems open to making the self-registration option available to deer hunters, as well. Unlike for bear and moose, wildlife biologists don’t collect the data they need at tagging stations; instead, they collect it from the butchers and meat processors across the state.

Additionally, there would be a minor fiscal impact of \$60,000 to \$80,000 to the Maine Deer Management Fund.

As a result of these conversations and meetings, I present this bill proposal before you today. I defer to the Committee and the Department for the details of the pilot program. There could be a limited rollout either during specific seasons (like archery) or during low-volume harvest days (like weekdays). It could also be limited to locations by county or otherwise. No matter how, I hope that this option becomes available to hunters like Roger.

It is vital that we modernize hunting if it is going to remain a part of Maine's culture, heritage, and history. Sometimes, to preserve a piece of the past, we have to adapt in the present in order to protect it in the future. Hunting is one such thing.

In particular, I am thinking of the newer, younger hunters, who might prefer the convenience of electronic deer tagging. Once they have this option, they may have a whole lifetime of hunting ahead of them, making memories with their family in the fields and woods—keeping the tradition alive for generations to come.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Bailey', with a long, sweeping underline.

**Donna Bailey**  
State Senator, Senate District 31  
*Buxton, Old Orchard Beach, and Saco*