



Maine Professional Guides Association

www.maineguides.org

Testimony in Opposition to LD 777 An Act to Standardize the Muzzle-loading Season Statewide March 10, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the committee, my name is James Cote and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Professional Guides Association in opposition to LD 777.

LD 777 would require that the muzzleloader season on deer must be the same in all areas of the state. While we believe that this legislation is well intended, we are concerned that it may also have unintended consequences.

First, we are concerned that in certain years, where we experience significant snow depths in early December, that adding an additional week of muzzleloader seasons to northern wildlife management districts could mean an over-harvest of deer going to yards for the winter.

Secondly, we are also concerned that by requiring muzzleloader season to be the same in all areas of the state that this legislation could also mean that wildlife management districts that currently enjoy two weeks of muzzleloader season in central and southern regions of the state could be reduced to just one week.

We acknowledge that some wildlife management districts on the edge of the northern districts and central/coastal districts may need some reevaluation and perhaps some may indeed qualify for an additional week. We would suggest that DIFW is in the best position to perform that evaluation, and would support them providing recommendations.

To the extent that it is warranted, we would also urge the committee to provide the Department with the flexibility/authority they need to make these decisions in rule, rather than statute, if they feel they lack authority to do so.

Thank you for your consideration, and we would be pleased to provide any information for the work session.