



**BACKCOUNTRY**  
**HUNTERS & ANGLERS**  
NEW ENGLAND

April 20, 2025

Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD 1343 – An Act to Protect the Right to Harvest Wildlife

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

I am John Simoneau and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine members of New England Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA). BHA seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting by supporting land conservation, public access to hunting and fishing areas, fair chase, and the sound management of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers supports the need to define "harvest," but we are testifying against this bill as written due to unacceptable language used in the definition.

When used as in part B of the definition for harvest, "kill for sport" is not appropriate. In an attempt to save plummeting wildlife populations, the term "sport hunting" was developed by hunter-conservationists in the 19th century to differentiate recreational hunting from the wholesale commercial slaughter of wildlife that was the norm at that time. The Boone and Crockett Club notes that sport hunting was used to describe "a form of hunting with an honor code that defined the rules of engagement based on the quality of the hunt, not the quantity of game taken;" and that a sporting approach to hunting "represents a desire to constrain ourselves by limiting our advantage to give the animals we pursue a legitimate chance to escape." That has nothing to do with killing for sport, which implies killing for the joy of killing or a competitive approach to killing animals.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, of which Maine DIFW is a member, has endorsed The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which states that "Wildlife may only be killed for a legitimate, non-frivolous purpose." Hunter-Ed, which is the required study guide for obtaining a hunting license in Maine, states that "Animals can be killed only for legitimate purposes—for food and fur, in self-defense, or for protection of property." We also refer the committee to the testimony of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife presented by Deputy Commissioner Tim Peabody. In his April 9 comments the Deputy Commissioner pointed out that the recent Supreme Court decision on the Constitutional Right to Food found the amendment rights do not extend to hunting for "sport" or commercial enterprise, and that the Department's current legislative mandate would "perhaps make including the term 'sport' unnecessary."



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Returning to the language of LD 1342, we strongly recommend the following changes to address the concerns about "kill for sport" by replacing that with language that has been adopted by our nation's fish and wildlife agencies, Maine's hunter education program, and is consistent with the Department's statutory guidance, as follows:

To catch, trap, hunt, fish, take or kill for a legitimate purpose ~~sport~~, such as wildlife management or population control.

The future of hunting depends on the vast majority of Americans who do not hunt. Eighty-four percent of Americans approve of hunting for food and 80% approve of hunting for wildlife management, but less than 50% support hunting for sport. We urge the committee to edit the bill's language by using broadly encompassing, non-controversial language. With those changes Backcountry Hunters and Anglers would support this bill.

Sincerely,

*John C Simoneau*

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