

Testimony in Support of LD 2054

An Act to Clarify the Laws Regarding Moose Hunting Permits for Hunting Outfitters

Submitted by Benjamin Allen, Owner, Epic Adventures Outfitters

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of LD 2054. My name is Benjamin Allen, and I am the owner of Epic Adventures Outfitters. I strongly support this bill, which seeks to clarify and improve the allocation of moose hunting permits for outfitters in Maine.

The Need for Reform: Data and Context

Maine's moose permit system is highly competitive. In 2024, over 72,000 hunters applied for just 4,105 available permits—a success rate of only 5.7%. Of these, 90% of permits are allocated to residents, up to 8% to non-residents, and up to 2% to hunting lodges. However, the current lodge tag system has created significant imbalances:

- In 2025, there were five Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs) where no September nonresident moose tags were issued through the general lottery, yet multiple lodge tags were distributed in each of those zones. This results in lost business opportunities for Maine Guides and reduces fairness in the system³.
- Last season, the number of lodge tags awarded nearly doubled the number of nonresident lottery tags, further highlighting the need for reform³.
- The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife confirms that the number of permits for 2025 remains unchanged from 2024, with 4,105 total permits, including 393 for non-residents out of over 25,000 nonresident applicants.

Proposed Solutions in LD 2054

I support the following changes under LD 2054:

- Cap lodge permits at no more than 50% of the nonresident lottery permits per WMD, evenly split between September and October bull seasons. Any unused lodge permits should be returned to the general nonresident lottery.
- Maintain adjacency requirements to ensure lodges remain within their WMD or in one that borders them.
- Prohibit the swapping of lodge permits with general lottery permits.
- Ban the sale of sub-permittee slots.
- Prevent the sale or transfer of lodge permits from one lodge to another³.

Why These Changes Matter

These reforms will create a more equitable environment for the entire hunting guide community in Maine, rather than favoring only the lodges. LD 2054 is not about eliminating lodge tags altogether; it is about clarifying the rules and ensuring fairness for all stakeholders involved³.

Conclusion

With thousands of applicants and only a small fraction receiving permits, it is critical that the allocation process is transparent and fair. The proposed changes in LD 2054 will help restore balance and opportunity for all Maine Guides and nonresident hunters.

Thank you for your consideration.