



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
353 WATER STREET
41 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA ME 04333-0041



**Testimony of Judith Camuso, Commissioner
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and
the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
February 26, 2025**

**"An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds
for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law
Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30,
2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"**

Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Judy Camuso, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am here today to testify in support of the biennial budget bill, LD 210.

Maine – like many states, both blue and red – is facing a tight budget environment. The Mills Administration has spent months carefully developing a balanced budget proposal to preserve the programs lawmakers and Maine people support, including education, revenue sharing, public safety, higher education, and school meals, while also protecting the long-term fiscal health of Maine.

Ultimately, we took a balanced approach: one that makes some investments - including operational needs such as technology efficiencies, health and safety improvements, collective bargaining impacts, etc. - that proposes some spending cuts, and that makes some targeted revenue increases. We know these proposals are difficult and appreciate that you will consider them with an open mind.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months to enact a budget that supports our greatest asset of all: the people of Maine.

The Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife is the lead agency in Maine with the responsibility to preserve, protect and enhance the inland fisheries and wildlife resources of the State; to encourage the wise use of these resources; to ensure coordinated planning for the future use and preservation of these resources; and to provide for effective management of these resources.

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In this budget, with concern for the tight budget environment, the department has made its best attempt to self fund initiatives within existing resources where possible.

The department's budget includes several reclass and reorganization requests. The State's collective bargaining unit agreements include negotiated language related to this process. Reclasses may be employee initiated (usually referred to as reclasses) or management initiated (usually referred to as reorganizations.) IF&W's reclass and reorganization requests are summarized at the end of my testimony in **Appendix A**.

Our budget also includes requests for increases to centralized services including financial, human resources, central fleet, and technology services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services as well as dispatch services provided by the Department of Public Safety. These rates are being adjusted as a result of vendor increases, capital needs, supply chain impacts, but the primary factor is the significant collective bargaining efforts approved by the Governor and Legislature. IF&W's centralized service requests are summarized at the end of my testimony in **Appendix B**.

Our budget proposal also includes one allotment adjustment as a result of the State's independent Revenue Forecasting Committee (RFC.) IF&W's RFC adjustment is summarized at the end of my testimony in **Appendix C**.

Our proposal also includes the addition of 14 new full-time positions and 10 new seasonal positions. These additional positions are necessary to fulfill the core objectives of the department. I will describe the need and impact of each new position throughout my testimony.

I will now move through each individual program in the department's budget beginning with the Administrative Services program.

Administrative Services-IF&W 0530

The Administrative Services program is listed on **page A-423** of the budget document. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations and Other Special Revenue. This program supports centralized services and the design, maintenance and repair of department owned facilities.

Other than one reorganization listed separately in **Appendix A**, there is one new initiative in this program that transfers and reallocates the cost of one Chief Planner position. This position was previously the department's federal aid coordinator and is now the department's water access coordinator overseeing new water access acquisitions, maintenance, and reconstruction of the department's 180 water access sites around the state. This initiative realigns the funding sources to more appropriately reflect the work being done. This initiative can also be found on **pages A-426, A-434, and A-450** of the budget document.

Transfers and reallocates the cost of one Chief Planner position from 70% Federal Expenditures Fund and 30% General Fund within the Resource Management Services - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program to 40% Federal Expenditures Fund within the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program, 30% General Fund within the Administrative Services - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program and 30% Other Special Revenue Funds within the Boating Access Sites program and provides funding for related All Other costs.

ATV Enforcement Fund Z276

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-424** is the ATV Enforcement Fund. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Other Special Revenue. This program provides funding for the enforcement of ATV laws, ATV education, and the purchase of necessary equipment related to ATV safety and enforcement activities.

The first new initiative in this program provides one-time funding for the replacement of aging equipment across the entire department. The initiative in this account only pertains to 10 ATVs that will enable the Maine Warden Service to replace aging and unreliable equipment. The remaining equipment pertains to Wildlife Management, and Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations. This initiative can also be found on pages **A-430, A-434, A-436, A-438, A-443, and A-448.**

Provides one-time funding for the replacement of 21 all-terrain vehicles, 28 snowmobiles, one snowmobile trailer, 2 boat trailers, 3 outboard motors, 2 boats, 8 trap nets, one electrofishing backpack, 10 electric utility vehicles, 2 one-ton trucks, 2 2-ton trucks, 4 truck beds, and 2 fish stocking tanks.

The second new initiative in this program reallocates two Game Warden positions. The US Coast Guard Recreational Boating Program provides funding to each state to support their recreational boating safety and enforcement activities through a formula based largely upon the number of registered watercraft in each state which has remained steady at approximately 120,000 per year. Due to increasing personnel costs the grant can no longer support the portion of nine existing positions funded through this grant. 50% of two Game Warden positions have been removed from the Coast Guard grant with replacement funds from the ATV Enforcement Fund and Snowmobile Enforcement Fund. The Warden Service receives approximately \$1.4 million from the Coast Guard each federal fiscal year. This initiative can also be found on **page A-430** of the budget document, and does not increase the General Fund.

Reallocates the cost of 2 Game Warden positions from Enforcement Operations - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, 50% General Fund and 50% Federal Expenditures Fund to 50% General Fund Enforcement Operations - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program and one position 50% Enforcement Operations - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, Other Special Revenue Funds and one position 50% ATV Enforcement Fund program, Other Special Revenue Funds and provides funding for related All Other costs.

ATV Safety and Educational Program 0559

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-425** is the ATV Safety and Educational Program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations and Other Special Revenue. This program ensures that persons aged ten to sixteen are in compliance with the law requiring them to complete a training program approved by the Department in order to operate such vehicles in the State of Maine. Recreational vehicle education programs are conducted to raise public awareness and promote better understanding of outdoor recreation safety issues and to encourage better support for recreational vehicle safety and enforcement efforts.

The only new initiative in this program is an adjustment to the Other Special Revenue, which is a percentage of the state gas tax distributed to the Department for ATV enforcement grants. This adjustment is made by the Revenue Forecasting Committee, and detailed in **Appendix C**.

Boating Access Sites 0631

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-426** is the Boating Access Sites program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Federal Expenditure Funds and Other Special Revenue. The Boating Access Sites program was established to increase public access to boat launch sites and to acquire and develop access sites to Maine public waters and is funded by a portion of the proceeds from sales of the Sportsman license plates.

The first new initiative in this program found on **page A-426** establishes one Parks Maintenance Coordinator position and provides funding for All Other costs. This position will support the “federal real property” requirements to maintain controls over boating access sites purchased using federal boating access funds. The position will also provide additional maintenance support for the department’s 180 existing access sites. This General Fund request is part of the distribution of funds from the requested fishing license increase found in **Part NNN** of the budget on **page 113**.

Establishes one Parks Maintenance Coordinator position and provides funding for related All Other costs.

The next new initiative found on **page A-426** provides one time allocation in the Capital Expenditures line category to purchase and improve land and facilities for boat launch sites throughout the State. Federal funds come from grant awards from the U.S. Department of the Interior. Matching funds come from the Land for Maine's Future awards.

Provides one-time funding to purchase and improve land and facilities for boat launch sites throughout the State.

Camp North Woods Z193

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-427** is the Camp North Woods program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Other Special Revenue. This program was established to provide opportunities for youth in the outdoors, where they can learn lifelong skills and the importance of sustaining Maine's natural resources. This program is funded through camp application fees and private donations. There are no new initiatives for this program.

Endangered Nongame Operations 0536

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-428** is the Endangered Nongame Operations program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations, Federal Expenditure Funds, and Other Special Revenue. This program provides management of nongame wildlife and endangered species to maintain and enhance various species of fish and wildlife as well as the ecosystems upon which they depend. Nongame wildlife includes all terrestrial, and freshwater species that are not ordinarily collected, or taken for sport or profit.

The first new initiative in this program found on **page A-428** establishes one IF&W Senior Resource Biologist position and two IF&W Resource Biologist positions. The Senior Resource Biologist supports the land acquisition program and this makes permanent a position that the program has been utilizing for several years through a contract with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI.) One of the Resource Biologists will assist with environmental review of DEP permitting, helping landowners, and developers with avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts to wildlife and habitats. The second Resource Biologist will provide technical assistance to municipalities to incorporate wildlife habitat considerations into comprehensive plans. Both are currently working as contract staff with WMI. This initiative can also be found on **page A-447** of the budget document. There is no General Fund increase in this request.

Establishes one IF&W Senior Resource Biologist position and 2 IF&W Resource Biologist positions and provides funding for related All Other costs.

The next new initiative in this program found on **page A-428** transfers one IF&W Resource Supervisor position from the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program General Fund to the Endangered Nongame Operations program Federal Expenditures Fund. This is an administrative request from the Bureau of Budget to change the home account for this position. This initiative can also be found on **page A-435** of the budget document. There is no General Fund financial impact from this initiative.

Transfers one IF&W Resource Supervisor position from the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program, General Fund to the Endangered Nongame Operations program, Federal Expenditures Fund.

Enforcement Operations – IF&W 0537

The next Budget Program presented on **page A-430** is the Enforcement Operations program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations, Federal Expenditure Funds, and Other Special Revenue. The Maine Warden Service enforces Title 12, Chapters 901-939, enforces all rules promulgated by the Commissioner, and enforces the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Maine Warden Service also enforces the Maine boating and recreational vehicle laws (snowmobile and ATV). The Maine Warden Service is, by statute, responsible for searches for persons presumed lost or drowned in the fields, forests and inland waters of the State of Maine. Game Wardens of the Maine Warden Service are uniformed law enforcement officers with full police powers and statewide jurisdiction.

The first new initiative in this program not previously covered in my testimony is found on **page A-431** of the budget document. This initiative reallocates the cost of one Game Warden Specialist position and reduces All Other to fund the reallocation. Revenue for the Whitewater Rafting program is derived from fees charged to each commercial rafter on certain Maine rivers and allocation fees paid by commercial rafting companies. The number of rafters has declined to approximately 45,000 per year which is an insufficient number of rafters to keep pace with rising personal services costs. This initiative can also be found on **page A-454**, and there is no increase to the General Fund.

Transfers and reallocates the cost of one Game Warden Specialist position from 50% Whitewater Rafting - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, Other Special Revenue Funds and 50% Enforcement Operations - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, General Fund to 70% Enforcement Operations - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, General Fund and 30% Whitewater Rafting - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, Other Special Revenue Funds and reduces funding for related All Other costs.

The next new initiative found on **page A-431** establishes one Game Warden Sergeant position within the Maine Warden Service. This position will be responsible for being the statewide point of contact for the enforcement efforts around the spread of aquatic invasive species. This position will oversee an investigative unit for aquatic invasives. The additional Other Special Revenue funding for this was passed during the 131st Legislature, the creation of this position is part of the implementation. No General Fund Impact, increased allotment in Warden Service portion of Department AIS Fund.

Establishes one Game Warden Sergeant position and provides funding for related All Other costs.

Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations 0535

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-433** is the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations, Federal Expenditure Funds, Other Special Revenue,

and American Rescue Plan (ARP) State Fiscal Recovery Federal Expenditures Funds. The Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program works to ensure that all species of inland fish in the State of Maine are maintained and perpetuated for their intrinsic, ecological and economic value. In addition, this program works to ensure that inland fisheries are available for recreational, scientific and educational use.

The first new initiative found on **page A-433** establishes one IF&W Resource Biologist position within the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program. This position will implement aquatic invasive fish and wildlife field work programs including monitoring, assessment, and remediation of threats. The funding for this work was passed in the 131st Legislature and this is part of the implementation. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Establishes one IF&W Resource Biologist position and provides funding for related All Other costs.

The second new initiative found on **page A-434** reallocates the cost of one IF&W Resource Supervisor position. 20% of this position was previously funded through a MOU with the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to support their fish pathology needs. DMR now has their own position to perform this work. Our department pathologist will now be better positioned to both meet our fish health needs from our eight hatcheries and react to fish health issues statewide.

Reallocates the cost of one IF&W Resource Supervisor position from 80% General Fund and 20% Other Special Revenue Funds to 100% General Fund within the same program and reduces funding for related All Other costs.

The third initiative found on **page A-434** provides one-time allocation in the Capital Expenditures line category for a portion of the purchase of new capital equipment. This new equipment (not replacements) is needed to meet the operational needs in the fisheries and wildlife program. This initiative can also be found on **pages A-438 and A-448**, and there is no impact to the General Fund

Provides one-time funding for 3 snowmobiles, 3 all-terrain vehicles, 2 trailers, one electrofishing control box, and 2 boats.

The fourth initiative found on **page A-435** establishes two Fish Culturist Assistant Supervisor positions within the Fisheries and Hatcheries program. This would add a Fish Culturist Assistant Supervisor position to each of the Grand Lake Stream and Palermo fish hatcheries to mirror the organizational structure at the department's other six facilities.

Establishes 2 Fish Culturist Assistant Supervisor positions.

The fifth initiative found on **page A-435** provides Other Special Revenue Funds allocation for operating expenses for the Fisheries and Hatcheries Division from the Lake and River Protection Fund. This initiative will provide additional allocation for the Fisheries Division in response to the increased work requirements from the increase in the Lake and River Protection sticker revenue. There is no impact to the General Fund

Provides funding for operating expenses in the Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations program, Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations - Lake and River Protection Fund Other Special Revenue Funds account.

Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Z427

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-436** is the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations. This is a new program created with a portion of the proposed increased fishing license fee (**Part NNN, page 113**), in order to sustain the department's current fisheries programs and provide future programs targeting protecting and enhancing our valued fisheries.

The only new Initiative on **page A-436** provides General Fund appropriations for operating expenses for this program, with revenue received from the increased fishing license fee.

The Department is requesting a fishing license fee increase, and a portion of the increase will be dedicated specifically to fisheries conservation and enhancement of native and sportfish fish, including maintaining and enhancing existing management programs, and initiatives identified in the publicly derived fisheries strategic management plan and the Maine Wildlife Action Plan. The Department has requested an amendment to **Part NNN, page 113**, to reflect a change in the fishing license fee increase proposal and a corresponding change to the appropriation in this initiative.

Provides funding for operating expenses for the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement program and recognize the revenue increase from the sale of fishing licenses.

Landowner Relations Z140

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-437** is the Landowner Relations program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations and Other Special Revenue. The Landowner Relations program was established to foster good relationships between landowners and outdoor recreationists, and promote high standards of courtesy, respect and responsibility by outdoor recreationists in their relations with landowners. This program is funded through a General Fund appropriation the sale of Outdoor Partners Program Membership and from a portion (20%) of the sale of the Sportsman License Plate. There are no new initiatives for this program.

Licensing Services – IF&W 0531

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-438** is the Licensing Services program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations, Federal Expenditure Funds, and Other Special Revenue (Lifetime License Account). The Licensing Services – IF&W program is responsible for the administration and issuance of over 500,000 licenses, stamps and permits and the registration of 70,000 all-terrain vehicles, 80,000 snowmobiles and 120,000 boats. The Division accomplishes the sale of these licenses, permits and registrations through its work with over 750 sales agents located throughout Maine.

The first new initiative found on **page A-438** provides a one-time Other Special Revenue Funds Lifetime License Account allocation for repairs to an aviation hangar and storage garage at the Greenville Regional facility. The hangar and storage buildings at the Greenville headquarters are in need of extensive repairs to protect their structural integrity. Roofing, windows, doors, insulation, and concrete repairs are included in this initiative. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Provides one-time funding for repairs to an aviation hangar and a storage garage at the Greenville Regional facility.

The second new initiative found on **page A-439** provides a one-time Other Special Revenue Funds Lifetime License Account allocation for the purchase of a replacement excavator. The current machine is 22 years old and is used year-round by our Engineering Division. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Provides one-time funding for the replacement of one excavator.

The third new initiative found on **page A-439** provides a one-time Other Special Revenue Funds Lifetime License Account allocation for the construction of a heated garage bay and bunkroom at the Strong regional facility. The heated garage bay will provide proper storage for items a recent insurance inspection has identified as unallowable inside the office space. The bunkroom is necessary for overnight stays by staff from other regions when assisting with research and programs. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Provides one-time funding for the construction of a heated garage bay and bunkroom at the Strong regional facility.

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund 0829

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-440** is the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Other Special Revenue. The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund was established to provide funding for projects that would perpetuate Maine's outdoor heritage. The Outdoor Heritage Fund awards grants semi-annually to natural resource organizations for conservation and recreation projects that meet the guidelines stated in the Outdoor Heritage Fund's strategic plan. The fund is governed by a Board of seven members and is funded through the sale of special lottery tickets. There are no new initiatives for this program.

Office of the Commissioner – IF&W 0529

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-441** is the Office of the Commissioner. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations and Other Special Revenue. The Commissioner's Office is responsible for the administration and management of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, develops and implements long range plans for the management and use of the state's fish and wildlife resources and the use of recreational vehicles, and supports services provided by central service agencies in areas common to all divisions such as the Office of Information Technology and the Natural Resources Service Center. The office is also responsible for the development, coordination, maintenance and evaluation of the Department's comprehensive fish and wildlife programs.

The first new initiative on **page A-441** provides a one-time Other Special Revenue allocation for the repair of department owned dams. This initiative sets up spending authority in the department's DICAP account to address department owned dam infrastructure improvements. The top three priorities are Spicer Pond in Shapleigh, Stowers Meadow in Stockton Springs, and Orange River in Whiting. The Department owns 63 dams. This initiative is paired with **Part Y** on **page 68** of the budget which transfers the funds to the department from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund.

Provides one-time funding for the repair of department-owned dams.

The second new initiative on **page A-441** establishes one Public Service Manager II position within the Commissioner's Office. This position will provide a business manager for the Department to supervise the Federal Aid Coordinator, Financial Resource Administrator, Department Inventory Property Specialist, and be the liaison to the Natural Resources Service Center. This position existed within the department 20 years ago and will align IF&W's structure with the other natural resource agencies.

Establishes one Public Service Manager II position.

Public Information and Education Division 0729

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-443** is the Public Information and Education Division. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations and Other Special Revenue. The Public Information and Education Division administers programs to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of inland fisheries and wildlife resources through public education, promotion, and dissemination of information.

The first new initiative on **page A-443** establishes one Public Relations Specialist position at the Maine Wildlife Park. This position will be based at the Maine Wildlife Park and will be responsible for hiring, training, and supervising 6-8 seasonal contract employees who serve customers in the gatehouse and nature store and will provide customer service to park visitors. This position would also be responsible for year-round coordination of the volunteer program. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Establishes one Public Relations Specialist position and provides funding for related All Other costs.

The second new initiative on **page A-444** provides Other Special Revenue Funds allocation for operating expenses in the Youth Conservation Education Fund. Revenue for this account is derived from the auction of ten moose permits annually. The amount raised from this auction has been steadily increasing each year and reached \$267,901 in fiscal year 2024. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Provides funding for operating expenses in the Public Information and Education, Division of program, Youth Conservation Education Other Special Revenue Funds account.

Resource Management Services – IF&W 0534

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-446** is the Resource Management Services program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations, Federal Expenditure Funds, and Other Special Revenue. The Bureau of Resource Management is responsible for the management of the State's inland fisheries and wildlife resources and the development of rules governing the effective management of these resources. The Bureau maintains and enhances the State's fisheries and wildlife resources and habitats through acquisition and habitat improvement, manages wildlife sanctuaries and management areas, coordinates animal damage control functions and controls the importation and transportation of wildlife species and associated parasites and diseases within Maine.

The first initiative on **page A-446** provides a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$150,000 and a one-time Federal Expenditures Fund allocation of \$350,000 for the reconstruction of the Swan Island pier. The pier at the Swan Island Wildlife Management area in Richmond needs a full replacement.

Provides one-time funding for the reconstruction of the Swan Island pier.

The second initiative on **page A-446** establishes two IF&W Senior Resource Biologist positions. One Senior Biologist will cover the USFW Real Property requirements. This mandates that the department maintains the boundaries and remedy encroachments of any property with a nexus to federal funds. This will primarily be our wildlife management areas. The second position will help meet new state requirements to expand wildlife research and monitoring programs to include birds and bats in the Gulf of Maine in order to minimize impacts from Offshore Wind development and provide additional support for conservation of coastal resources related to sea level rise, marsh migration and seabird conservation. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Establishes 2 IF&W Senior Resource Biologist positions and reduces All Other to fund these positions.

The third initiative on **page A-447** establishes one IF&W Resource Biologist position. This position will manage and maintain the department's endangered and threatened wildlife species and habitat datasets that are used to make recommendations to private landowners, municipalities, land trusts, developers, and the Department of Environmental Protection. This position will do the work that was directed by LD 1246 passed in 2023, in addition to mapping shorebird and other wildlife habitats. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Establishes one IF&W Resource Biologist position and reduces All Other to fund this position.

The fourth initiative on **page A-449** provides an increase in Other Special Revenue Funds allocation for operating expenses in the Black Bear Research and Management Fund. Revenue for this account is derived from the sale of nonresident late season bear hunting permits and from the sale of bear trapping permits and will be used to fund ongoing operational expenses for the bear management program. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Provides funding for operating expenses in the Resource Management Services - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, Black Bear Research and Management Fund Other Special Revenue Funds account.

The fifth initiative on **page A-449** provides an increase in Other Special Revenue Funds allocation for operating expenses in the Moose Research and Management Fund. Revenue for this account is derived from the sale of nonresident moose hunting permits and will be used to fund ongoing operational expenses for the moose management program. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Provides funding for operating expenses in the Resource Management Services - Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, Moose Research and Management Fund Other Special Revenue Funds account.

The sixth initiative on **page A-449** provides an allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund and Other Special Revenue Funds for the purchase of land for wildlife habitat. This allocation is needed to purchase land for wildlife habitat and to award conservation act grants that come from various federal grants. Matching funds come from the sale of duck stamps, deer hunting permits, and private donations. This initiative can also be found on **page A-453** of the budget document. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Provides one-time funding to purchase land for wildlife habitat.

The seventh new initiative on **page A-450** transfers one Public Service Manager II position, one Resource Management Coordinator position, and five Biologist II positions from the Natural Areas program within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry to the Resource Management – Wildlife program at IF&W. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Transfers one Public Service Manager II position, one Resource Management Coordinator position and 5 Biologist II positions from the Natural Areas program within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to the Resource Management Services - IF&W program within the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. This initiative also transfers All Other for the Natural Areas program from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

The eighth initiative on **page A-450** establishes ten seasonal IF&W Resource Technician positions. This initiative seasonally staffs the Wildlife Conflict Program which helps Maine residents reduce property damage from wildlife, assists with surveillance of and response to wildlife diseases, and responds to public safety issues with wildlife. This program reduces the burden of wardens and biologists responding to 10,000 wildlife conflict calls each year. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Establishes 10 seasonal IF&W Resource Technician positions and provides funding for related All Other costs.

The ninth initiative on **page A-451** establishes one IF&W Resource Technician position and reduces All Other to fund the General Fund portion of the position. This position will coordinate the work of the Wildlife Conflict Program. This program helps Maine residents reduce property damage from wildlife, assists with the surveillance of and response to wildlife diseases, and responds to public safety issues with wildlife. There is no increase to the General Fund.

Establishes one IF&W Resource Technician position and reduces All Other to fund a portion of the position.

Search and Rescue 0538

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-452** is the Search and Rescue program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund appropriations. The Search and Rescue program was established for the purpose of actively searching for any person who is lost, stranded or drowned in the woodlands or inland waters in the state. There are no new initiatives for this program.

Waterfowl Habitat Acquisition and Management 0561

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-453** is the Waterfowl Habitat Acquisition and Management program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Federal Expenditure Funds and Other Special Revenue. The purpose of the Waterfowl Habitat Acquisition and Management Fund program is to acquire waterfowl habitat that supports waterfowl management goals and objectives and, where feasible, improve habitat and species abundance to enhance, restore or create new opportunities. The only initiative within this program was discussed earlier in my testimony and can be found on **page A-449**.

Whitewater Rafting – IF&W 0539

The next Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-454** is the Whitewater Rafting IF&W program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Other Special Revenue. The Whitewater Rafting Fund mitigates environmental problems and any adverse effect on competing uses of rivers, promotes safety, education, and enforcement of whitewater rafting laws and department rules. This program dedicates sixty-five percent of the revenue from fees and surcharges paid by white water rafting outfitters and guides to stay with Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for administration of the whitewater rafting laws and rules. The only initiative within this program was discussed earlier in my testimony and can be found on **page A-431**.

Whitewater Rafting Fund 0533

The last Budget Program presented in the Budget document on **page A-455** is the Whitewater Rafting Fund program. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Other Special Revenue. The Whitewater Rafting Fund program mitigates environmental problems and any adverse effect on competing uses of rivers, promotes safety, education, and

enforcement of whitewater rafting laws and department rules. This program returns ten percent of the revenue collected from fees and surcharges paid by white water rafting outfitters and guides to be credited back to the county in which the river is located. There are no new initiatives for this program.

There are also four language parts in the biennial budget impacting Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

*Part Y found on **page 68** authorizes the State Controller to transfer \$2.5 million from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund in FY26 to provide one-time funds for the repair of department owned dams.*

Justification: I spoke on this earlier regarding setting up the spending authority in the DICAP account. The Department owns 63 dams. The top three priorities are Spicer Pond in York County, Stowers Meadow, and Orange River in Washington County.

*Part LLL found on **page 112** amends the fiscal stability program to begin in the 2028- 2029 biennium.*

Justification: The General Fund by law must provide 18% of the department's General Fund budget. In fiscal year 2026 the General Fund will be providing approximately 50% of the department's General Fund budget.

*Part MMM-1 found on **page 112** authorizes the State Controller to transfer \$100,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$100,000 in fiscal year 2027 from the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Carrying Account for the Maine Warden Service to purchase one replacement aircraft engine in each fiscal year.*

Justification: This will provide for engine and propeller replacement in one of four Warden Service aircraft each year.

*Part MMM-2 found on **page 112** authorizes the State Controller to transfer \$125,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$125,000 in fiscal year 2027 from the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Carrying Account for the Maine Warden Service to purchase replacement boat motor and trailer units.*

Justification: The Warden Service has been relying on federal Coast Guard funds for purchasing replacement watercraft. Increased personnel costs and the cost of watercraft have not allowed an appropriate replacement schedule. This will help them get back on track.

Part NNN on **page 113** increases fishing license fees assessed by the department by \$7.00.

Justification: In order to sustain our current fisheries programs and provide future programs targeting protecting and enhancing our valued fisheries, the department is seeking an increase in fishing license fees. This would be the first cost increase to fishing licenses in 15 years. (last increase (\$4) was approved in 2009 and implemented in 2010). We have requested an amendment to the fees in Part NNN that will enhance the fisheries program, support our (8) hatcheries and the potential for a future hatchery, and strengthen our water access program.

With over 360,000 licensed anglers in the state, Maine's fisheries contribute nearly \$400 million to Maine's economy according to a 2014 study, supporting many small businesses such as tackle shops, general stores, guide services, sporting camps, restaurants and more. Many of these businesses are located in rural Maine, where other economic opportunities are limited.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.

Appendix A: Reclasses/Reorgs/Range Changes

Civil Service Rules require the Director of the Bureau of Human Resources to maintain the classification plan and establish the processes and procedures with which to do so. There is a long-standing process in place to evaluate proper classification of positions and determine through a functional job analysis whether a position meets the requirements for reclassification, including any pay adjustment. The State's collective bargaining unit agreements include negotiated language related to this process. Actions may include changing classification or keeping the same classification, but changing pay range (usually referenced in blippie as range change). Requests may be employee initiated (usually referred to as reclass) or management initiated (usually referred to as reorganization). Approved employee-initiated actions include a retroactive pay component back to the date the request was signed. Reclass/reorg/range change initiatives in Part A of the budget are necessary to fund these approved actions, which is required before the action can be processed and paid.

One Secretary Associate position reorganized to a Secretary Specialist position (page A-423)

Justification: This position supports the Engineering Division of the Department. The reorganization is due to the increase in responsibilities to include creating and executing large construction contracts, (hatchery reconstruction, shooting ranges, Wildlife Park upgrades, energy efficiency, etc.) for the Division. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

Four IF&W Resource Biologist positions reorganized to four IF&W Senior Resource Biologist positions (page A-428 and A-448)

Justification: These Senior Resource Biologist positions have direct influence on population levels and conservation programs related to a particular species or group of species at a statewide level. This initiative reflects this responsibility. Each position has oversight of one of the following species groups: raptors, reptiles and amphibians, songbirds, and invertebrates. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

One Secretary Associate position reorganized to an Office Specialist II position (page A-431)

Justification: This position is an Augusta headquarters support person for the Bureau of Warden Service. The complexity and type of administrative work required to support the bureau requires two people to be equally responsible for the administrative functions. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

One IF&W Senior Resource Biologist position reorganized to an IF&W Resource Supervisor position and is reallocated from 70% Other Special Revenue Funds and 30% General Funds to 100% Other Special Revenue Funds (page A-433 and A-448)

Justification: This is part of the Fisheries Division reorganization to address the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program expansion that was passed in the 131st Legislature. This change will allow the supervision of an additional resource biologist focused on enhancing the Fisheries Division AIS work effort.

One Public Service Executive II position reorganized to a Public Service Manager II position and is transferred from the Resource Management – Wildlife program to the Resource Management – Fisheries program (page A-434 and A-448)

Justification: This is part of a reorganization within the Bureau of Resource Management to create a Fisheries Division Deputy Director to provide increased capacity to manage complex program and administrative requirements. This is a downgrade of an existing position and includes changes in the funding structure from federal wildlife funds to federal fisheries funds.

Seven IF&W Resource Technicians reorganized to seven IF&W Resource Biologists (page A-435)

Justification: This is part of the reorganization/enhancement of the Fisheries Division. This initiative utilizes existing positions at a higher level by giving them the work responsibility of a fisheries resource biologist.

Nine Office Associate II positions are reorganized to nine Office Specialist I positions, and one Office Associate II position is reorganized to a Senior Programmer Analyst (page A-439 and A-449)

Justification: These positions are directly involved with processing of license and registration sales which are responsible for over \$23 million per year in Department revenue. These positions have not been updated since 1999, essentially the transition from paper licenses to exclusively electronic processes. The Senior Programmer Analyst reclassification is part of the consolidation of the moose and deer lotteries into the Licensing Division for more efficient operations. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

Three Wildlife Keeper positions are reorganized to three Wildlife Care and Education Technician positions (page A-443)

Justification: The Department has increased and expanded our outreach efforts to meet goals related to public support for wildlife conservation in Maine. This effort, as well as providing

more professional care for our captive wildlife at the Maine Wildlife Park, has created the need to reclassify these positions. The Wildlife Park has around 80,000 visitors each year and brings in close to \$1M in revenue. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

One Office Associate II position is reorganized to an Office Specialist I position (page A-443)

Justification: This position provides front line customer service for the department in our Information Center at our Augusta Office. The position requires independent thinking and a high level of knowledge of laws, rules, and policies of the department. This reclassification reflects the skill needed to support the public and the department's customer service needs. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

One Public Relations Specialist position is reorganized to a Public Relations Representative position and reallocated from 100% General Funds to 90% General Funds and 10% Other Special Revenue Funds (page A-444)

Justification: This classification is more appropriate for the work being performed. This position leads our (on the ground and in the field) outreach for youth conservation education, Hooked on Fishing, Becoming an Outdoor Women and other programs. 10% of the position will be funded from the moose permit auction proceeds which supports youth education. Proceeds from the 2024 moose permit auction (10 permits) was \$267,901.

One seasonal Wildlife Keeper position is reorganized to a full-time Parks Maintenance Coordinator position and one seasonal Wildlife Keeper position is eliminated (page A-444)

Justification: This position change is part of a bigger reorganization at the Maine Wildlife Park allowing this position to focus on coordinating and performing the day to day maintenance needs of the Wildlife Park. This was previously a shared responsibility and is now focused on this position. This is not an additional headcount, as it eliminates an existing position. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

One Secretary Associate position is reorganized to a Secretary Specialist position (page A-444)

Justification: This initiative reclassifies a support position in the department's Information and Education Division to appropriately align with the complexity of contracting and procurement procedures for the Division. This reclassification is employee initiated and was also part of the supplemental budget.

One Wildlife Park Assistant Superintendent position is reorganized from a range 18 to a range 21 (page A-444)

Justification: As part of a complete reorganization at the Maine Wildlife Park, the Assistant Superintendent will be the first line supervisor for the Wildlife Care and Education Technician positions at the park and have more responsibilities related to infrastructure that supports appropriate animal husbandry. This initiative reflects these changes. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

One IF&W Resource Supervisor position is reorganized to a Public Service Manager II position (page A-447)

Justification: This initiative is part of an approved reorganization within the Bureau of Resource Management to create a Wildlife Division Deputy Director to provide increased capacity to manage complex program and administrative requirements.

One IF&W Resource Biologist position is reorganized to an IF&W Resource Supervisor position (page A-447)

Justification: This initiative is part of an approved reorganization with the Wildlife Division to create a supervisor in the Wildlife Diversity Section to oversee several biologists focused on wild bird conservation. This request was also part of the supplemental budget.

Appendix B: Centralized Services

The Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) develops, delivers, and maintains centralized government systems that support the financial, human resource, physical and technological infrastructure of state government. The services are billed to agencies through Internal Service Funds

All components of an internal service fund, including staff, All Other and capital, are included in Internal Service Fund budgeting. Personal Services increases the result of collective bargaining, or any other Personal Services action, as well as increases to All Other costs for various reasons, including vendor increases or supply chain costs, etc. impact these budgets. Internal Service Funds are meant to recover the costs of providing the service. DAFS bills agencies for these services and the agencies pay the bills with All Other funds.

In this biennial budget, DAFS has adjusted these rates for all of the reasons outlined above, but primarily the result of significant collective bargaining efforts approved by the Governor and Legislature. Agency All Other funds are not increased in the baseline to reflect the increased costs of the Internal Service Funds, so statewide all agencies will include initiatives for additional All Other to cover these services.

DAFS Centralized Services Internal Service Funds include:

- Service Centers within DAFS provide centralized accounting, payroll, budgeting and human resources services to departments and agencies.
- MaineIT is responsible for the delivery of safe, secure, and high-performing networks and systems to State Agencies for daily performance of their missions for the citizens of Maine. IT enterprise functions benefitting all state agencies are managed through this office to ensure consistency, volume discount efficiencies, and optimum performance and throughput.
- Central Fleet Management (CFM) within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle service including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection, and accident information processing.
- The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost.
- The Division of Leased Space manages leases encompassing office, warehouse, garage, storage, tower, classroom, mixed-use, and training spaces.

- Central Services within DAFS provides a wide range of mail services, including interoffice mail, as well as disposition of state surplus materials and equipment no longer needed by the state agency that purchased them. This group also manages federal surplus property.

Provides funding for an increase in the services provided by the Office of Information Technology (page A-439 and A-441)

Justification: This covers all Department technology services such as staff desk phones and computers, software licenses, Licensing database support (MOSES), GIS services, Warden Service radios etc... Approximately half of the increase reflects rate adjustments from OIT, the other half is additional technology equipment, primarily software licenses and computers for hatchery staff.

Provides funding for increased fees for Central Fleet Management (CFM) to fully fund the department's current need for vehicles (page A-431)

Justification: This increase reflects new vehicle pricing and maintenance increases at CFM. The Warden Service is a large portion of the department's CFM budget and travels approximately 3 million miles per year, which has been consistent over the past 20 years.

Provides funding for increased fees from the Department of Public Safety for dispatch services page A-431

Justification: Maine Statutes, Title 25, subsection 1533 establishes the Bureau of Consolidated Emergency Communications, within the Department of Public Safety. The bureau provides consolidated dispatch services to state, county and local governments. The Department of Public Safety calculates user costs by compiling records of dispatch calls and allocates a percentage of the cost to each department. The Warden Service receives about 20,000 calls for service per year, which is about 20% of total dispatch calls.

The department would like to amend this initiative to include additional increases submitted but not included in the fiscal year 2025 Supplemental Budget. An additional \$324,411 will be needed in each year of the biennium to fully fund these expenses. The revised amount requested is \$676,251 (replaces original request of \$351,840) in fiscal year 2026 and \$772,991 (replaces original request of \$448,580) in fiscal year 2027.

Provides funding for increased fees from the Natural Resources Service Center (page A-441)

Justification: Service Centers within DAFS provide centralized accounting, payroll, budgeting and human resources services to departments and agencies. Service Centers are established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through billings to departments and

agencies for services provided. The Service Center's expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

Appendix C: Allocation Adjustments

Adjusts funding to align with revenue projections from the December 1, 2024 Revenue Forecast Committee forecast.

Adjust funding to align with revenue projections from the December 1, 2024 revenue forecast (page A-425)

Justification: This adjustment reflects an anticipated revenue increase in the department's portion of the gas tax.