



**Testimony of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and
Wildlife**

**NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST
L.D. 126**

**“An Act to Improve the Fairness of Adaptive Management Study
Moose Hunt Permits by Exempting Those Permittees from the 4-
year Limitation on Receiving Another Permit”**

Presented By: Senator POULIOT of Kennebec

Date of Hearing: February 13, 2023



Good afternoon Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Jim Connolly, Bureau of Resource Management Director for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, neither for nor against L.D. 126.

This bill exempts permittees who received a permit for an adaptive management study moose hunt between 2019 and 2025 and were unsuccessful in harvesting a moose from the requirement that a person who receives a moose hunting permit is ineligible to obtain another permit for 4 years.

In 2021, the Department established the adaptive moose hunt in the western portion of WMD 4 to determine whether an increase in harvest of antlerless moose can reduce the impacts of winter ticks. This hunt is one component of a much larger, decade-long research program to better understand the health and status of Maine's moose population and find solutions to the winter tick issue. The basic premise behind the adaptive hunt is that by reducing the density of the host (moose), we may be able to reduce the prevalence of the parasite (winter ticks) enough to improve the health and productivity of moose.

This hunt was specifically designed to be 'adaptive,' in that results will be constantly monitored and used to inform future changes in how the hunt is structured. The Department is currently evaluating data from the first two years of the adaptive hunt, including results from aerial helicopter surveys, GPS collared moose, ovary collections, hunter success, and other parameters. This review will indicate whether any changes to law or rule are required to meet our research goals. Therefore, we would ask that the committee hold the work session on this bill until later in the session, so we have time to evaluate the impacts of this bill, as well as come back with any other recommended statute changes for the committee's consideration.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.