

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**IN SUPPORT OF
L.D. 1298**

“An Act To Enhance Fish and Wildlife Laws”

Sponsored By: Representative MARTIN of Sinclair. (GOVERNOR'S BILL)

Cosponsored by: President JACKSON of Aroostook and Representative: MARTIN of Eagle Lake.

DATE OF HEARING: March 20, 2019

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Judy Camuso, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **L.D. 1298**

Current law allows the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to open a fishing season if the change is necessary due to earlier than normal seasonal temperature changes or weather conditions.

This emergency bill provides the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife the authority to change the closing date of the recreational ice-fishing season by rule. The bill also clarifies that the opening date of the open water recreational fishing season may be changed. Furthermore, it amends the rule-making provision of the law to explicitly provide for adoption of changes through emergency rule making.

This change will allow more recreational angling opportunity, as well as continued economic opportunity for many small businesses such as general stores, sporting shops and restaurants that support ice fishing.

The current ice fishing season closes this Sunday, March 31st, and open water season begins Monday, April 1st. With weather conditions currently more appropriate for ice fishing than open water fishing, the Department would like to extend the ice fishing season in the northern zone via emergency rulemaking only on waters that are currently open to ice fishing. This will allow waters that are currently open to ice fishing to be ice fished while still protected under current regulations.

I would be glad to answer any questions.