

**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. 27

“An Act to Allow the Use of Crossbows during the Archery Season on Deer”

SPONSORED BY: Representative THERIAULT of China.

CO-SPONSORED BY: Cosponsored by Senator CYRWAY of Kennebec and Representatives: HANLEY of Pittston, LYFORD of Eddington, MASON of Lisbon, NADEAU of Winslow, REED of Carmel, SKOLFIELD of Weld, Senator: DAVIS of Piscataquis.

DATE OF HEARING: January 30, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Tim Peabody, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, neither for nor against **L.D. 27**.

This bill allows crossbow use during the regular archery-only deer hunting season. The Department wants to encourage simplification of our hunting laws as a theme during this legislative session to reduce complexity for our hunters and encourage increased participation. Simplification also means less administrative time for the Department.

Some added points regarding this proposal are that this is a change in allowable implements when hunting deer during the archery only season. Any conflict with this proposal is primarily social in nature however, it does have potential to increase hunter participation and therefore increase deer harvest earlier in the hunting season. This could mean, in some WMD's the antlerless deer harvest during archery season could increase to the point that we would need to remove the ability for archery hunters to harvest an antlerless deer without an antlerless deer permit.

In 2017, the legislature passed a law that reduced the age from 70 to 65 for those who could use a crossbow for any species during any season so that segment of the population can hunt with a crossbow anytime a bow and arrow can be used. Also, the Department issues permanent disability permits for persons to hunt with a crossbow for any species, during any season if they can provide proof of having a permanent disability. Over the past 5 years there have been 400 permits processed. Those permits would no longer be required if crossbow use was legal when bow and arrow use is permitted.

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