2 July 2018

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 843, "An Act to Adjust the Formula for Calculating the Allocation of Moose Permits for Hunting Lodges."

This bill seeks to change the way in which Moose Permits are distributed so as to issue some permits directly to hunting lodges. The biologists determine the annual number of available moose permits. There are always more applicants for Moose Permits than there are permits available, this is why the Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife runs the annual Moose Permit Lottery.

Although current law does set aside a small percentage of permits for hunting lodges, that set-aside is not triggered until a particular threshold of available permits is met. The hunting-lodge set-aside has never been triggered because the Departments biologists have never authorized that threshold of available permits. These experts strictly regulate the available permits each year based on the conditions of the moose herd. This is as it should be.

LD 843 would decrease the number of moose permits issued to nonresidents from 10 percent of the available moose permits each year to 8 percent and allocate 2 percent to hunting lodges. This bill will reduce the chances for individual hunters to obtain a Moose Permit and allow hunting lodges to profit off a dedicated stream of permits.

Right now, if a hunting lodge wants to market a moose hunt, they encourage moose-permit lottery winners to book the hunt with their lodge. Under LD 843, the lodge would market a package deal tied to the Moose Permit, although the permit still must be purchased from the state. This will be a fundamental shift in the Moose hunt, and put outfitters without Moose Permits at a disadvantage to those with Moose permits.

People who want to hunt Moose enter the lottery. This is a fair and simple process. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

For this reason, I return LD 843 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,
Paul R. LePage
Governor