

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 1951**

**“An Act Related to Hunting Dogs and Civil Trespass”**

**Reported by:** Representative Landry of Farmington  
pursuant to Resolve 2021 Chapter 77

**DATE OF HEARING: February 28, 2022**

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Dan Scott, Colonel of the Maine Warden Service speaking on behalf of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in support of **L.D. 1951**.

This bill is the result of proposals from a stakeholder group formed from Resolve 2021 Chapter 77. I was assigned to chair the group and worked with more than a dozen stakeholders and partners over the last 6 months to come to a majority consensus for recommended proposals and a report back to this committee. I provided that report back on January 10, 2022. LD 1951 addresses both training-on and hunting particular species because dogs involved in a chase tend to generate similar complaints whether they are training or hunting. This bill initiates the recommendations of the stakeholder group which I will summarize now.

1. The bill requires a person to obtain a permit to train a hunting dog on bear, fox or raccoon or hunt bear, coyote, bobcat, fox or raccoon with a dog. It exempts from the permit requirement a person with a junior hunting license and persons hunting or training in the presence of a guide they've hired. It provides for penalties for failure to have a permit and provides that permit fees are deposited into the Landowner Relations Fund. Additionally, it provides the Commissioner an avenue to suspend or revoke a dog training / hunting permit upon a conviction of a violation of this proposed provision of law.
2. The bill requires a person training with a dog in pursuit of a bear, fox or raccoon to have a collar on the dog with a functioning global positioning system tracker and a collar that legibly provides the name, telephone number and address of the owner of that dog.
3. It requires a person hunting with a dog in pursuit of a bear, coyote, bobcat, fox or raccoon to have a collar on the dog that has a functioning global positioning system tracker and adds foxes and raccoons to the list of wild animals a person may not hunt

with a dog unless the dog has a collar that legibly provides the name, telephone number and address of the owner of the dog.

4. It adds foxes and raccoons to the list of wild animals a person may not hunt with a dog unless the dog has a collar that legibly provides the name, telephone number and address of the owner of the dog.

5. The bill limits hunting fox or raccoons with dogs to not more than 6 dogs which is consistent with the limit for bear, coyote and bobcat.

6. The bill prohibits certain types of trespass by a hunting dog. I will summarize next:

A person may not turn a hunting dog loose in pursuit of a bear, coyote, bobcat, fox or raccoon:

A. Onto the property of another if the property is posted or if the landowner has notified the dog handler that hunting dogs are not allowed on the property;

or

B. In a manner that results in the hunting dog entering the property of another, if a hunting dog has been previously found on that property and any dog handler of the hunting dog has been notified in writing by a law enforcement officer within the previous 365 days that the landowner does not permit hunting dogs on the property.

The recommendations included a warning-based system in hopes to address complaints on repeat offenders of trespass by hunting dogs.

Finally, the stakeholder group discussed the possibility of requiring anyone engaging in the activity of training or hunting with a dog in pursuit of bear, coyote, bobcat, fox or raccoon be required to affix to each dog a functioning GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking collar to allow the dog handler to know the dog's location at all times and potentially head-off anticipated conflict. We do not currently have good information on how many would have to purchase this equipment if they became mandatory. There is the potential that some dog handlers, including new participants or those that hunt with their dogs infrequently, may be dissuaded by the financial burden of purchasing tracking equipment. Concerns around this suggestion were raised as to the high cost of such tracking collars and the hesitancy some traditional dog hunters may have to such technology. Additionally, it is worth noting that any tracking collar requirement was not suggested to be associated with any mandatory requirement to provide tracking dog information to law enforcement. Merely as a means to ensure the dog handler has at their disposal all available means to know the location of their dogs in order to head off a potential landowner conflict or protect the dog from dangers / hazards.

The department feels the work of the stakeholder group and subsequent recommendations are good resolutions to a challenging situation which has been dividing the landowner and hunting community. All stakeholder group members worked hard and patiently to identify middle ground solutions which will allow law enforcement to address the

concerns of landowners without being unnecessarily restrictive to the activity of hunting with dogs.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time.