

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 258**

LD Title: An Act To Establish and Coordinate a Volunteer Corps of Search and Rescue Specialists within the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

SPONSORED BY: Senator Miramant of Knox

CO-SPONSORED BY: Representative DOUDERA of Camden and Senators: BELLOWS of Kennebec, CYRWAY of Kennebec, Representatives: DODGE of Belfast, EVANGELOS of Friendship, HOBBS of Wells, LANDRY of Farmington, PLUECKER of Warren, RISEMAN of Harrison.

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2019

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Lieutenant Kevin Adam, of the Warden Service, at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in opposition to **L.D. 258**.

This bill would direct the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish and coordinate a volunteer corps of search and rescue specialists whose initial and ongoing training is delivered by the Department and who are deputized to engage in search and rescue operations.

In addition to being a Lieutenant, I am also the Statewide Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Department. Per Title 12 §10105 the Department has statutory authority for all search and rescue missions for persons who have gone into the woodlands or onto the inland waters of the State on a hunting, fishing or other trip and have become lost, stranded, or drowned.

The Maine Warden Service responds to over 400 searches per year and as such, has a long-standing relationship that dates back to the early 1980's with the Maine Association of Search Rescue (MASAR). This organization was formed to provide the Maine Warden Service with certified, competent, professional volunteers to be used on search missions.

MASAR currently has 16 certified teams and 200 members spread out across the state.

MASAR trains to national standards, and hosts a yearly conference where the most up to date search techniques and tactics are trained out. Warden Service is an active participant at this conference.

As the Search and Rescue Coordinator I attend quarterly meetings with MASAR to discuss recent searches, training, equipment, and trends in search and rescue nationally.

LD 258 seeks to establish a system which is already in existence and for that reason the Department opposes the proposed legislation.

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