

**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. 265

LD TITLE: “An Act To Increase Opportunities for Hunters, Anglers and Sporting Camps by Extending the Season on Upland Game”

SPONSORED BY: Senator BLACK of Franklin,

Cosponsored by Representative LANDRY of Farmington and Senators: DAVIS of Piscataquis, President Jackson of Aroostook, LUCHINI of Hancock, and Representatives: COSTAIN of Plymouth, DUNPHY of Old Town, HALL of Wilton, MARTIN of Eagle Lake, Martin of Sinclair.

DATE OF HEARING: February 4, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Nate Webb, Research and Assessment Supervisor for the Wildlife Division, speaking on behalf of the Department, neither for nor against **L.D. 265**.

This bill amends the general hunting season provisions to direct the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to extend the open seasons on upland game by one additional day, the last Saturday of September, annually. It defines the term "upland game" as snowshoe hare, gray squirrel, ring-necked pheasant, ruffed grouse and bobwhite quail.

It appears that this bill seeks to create a day when it is possible to hunt upland game and fish during the same trip. Although October fishing opportunities are more limited than those in September, some opportunities to hunt upland game and fish on the same day do currently exist in most areas of the State. This includes many waters in northern Maine that are open to fishing by special rule.

In some years, this bill would create an overlap between the upland game hunting season and the September moose hunting season. In the past, there has been concern expressed by grouse hunters when moose hunting parties are allowed to harvest grouse during the early part of the upland game season.

Finally, by requiring the Commissioner to add one additional Saturday to the upland game hunting season, during some years there would be a gap when hunting would not be allowed between this day and regular October 1st start date. This adds complexity to our hunting regulations and could result in unintentional violations by hunters who do not realize the season is closed between opening Saturday and the resumption of the regular upland game season in October.

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