

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 617**

An Act To Increase to 3 the Number of Youth Deer Hunting Days

SPONSORED BY: Representative HUTCHINS of Penobscot

CO-SPONSORED BY: DeVEAU of Caribou, LYFORD of Eddington, McCREIGHT of Harpswell, ORDWAY of Standish, STEWART of Presque Isle, Senator: TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin.

DATE OF HEARING: February 20, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Jim Connolly, Resource Management Director of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in opposition to **L.D. 617**.

This bill authorizes the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish 2 additional youth deer hunting days, the Monday and Tuesday following the last Saturday of the regular firearms season on deer, to the current youth deer hunting day, which occurs on the Saturday preceding the residents-only Saturday of the regular deer hunting season.

Currently, youth are afforded youth days for deer, bear, turkey and waterfowl. Allowing an additional two days would impact muzzleloader opportunities for the rest of the hunting public. Additionally, it would allow the use of a regular firearm in muzzleloader season. As the law stands now, youth could still hunt on those days with the use of a muzzleloader. This fragmented season would overly complicate season dates and take away 2 of the 12 days allowed to all resident and nonresident hunters to accommodate youth only. We have tried to remain focused on simplifying our laws and avoid adding complexity. We support and encourage looking at ways to increase the success of youth hunters, but discourage creating conflicts with other hunting opportunities and tempting absence from school as this bill proposes a Monday and Tuesday hunt.

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