

**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. 313

**“AN ACT TO INCREASE ACCESS TO MOOSE AND DOE PERMITS FOR
COMBAT-INJURED VETERANS”**

SPONSORED BY: Representative JAVNER of Chester

CO-SPONSORED BY: Representative CARNEY of Cape Elizabeth
Representative DRINKWATER of Milford
Representative HANINGTON of Lincoln
Representative LANDRY of Farmington
Representative TUELL of East Machias

DATE OF HEARING: February 11, 2019

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Bill Swan, Director of Licensing and Registration at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, neither for nor against **L.D. 313**.

Because this bill is a concept draft at this time, the Department cannot speak directly to the specifics of the bill. However, the Department would like to take this opportunity to make members of the Committee aware of several items that are in place already that benefit disabled veterans. Veterans with a service-connected disability of 50% or more are eligible for free hunting, fishing, trapping, and guide licenses. We currently have thousands of disabled veterans with these licenses. In addition, in conjunction with the Department of Veteran Services, the Department allocates 30 moose hunting permits each year to disabled veterans. These permits are for designated areas in Aroostook County. Also, anyone who has a complimentary paraplegic hunting license is entitled to an any-deer permit in the district of their choice in any part of the State open to the taking of antlerless deer. Lastly, there are many special permits issued by the Commissioner's office to people with various disabilities to make it possible for them to participate in an activity.

The Department would also like to point out that in the case of any-deer permits, a high percentage of all applicants currently receive a permit through the lottery process. Also, current law allows the transfer of a permit to a person who has not received a permit in a WMD in which they want to hunt. These two facts make it highly likely that a combat-injured veteran would receive an any-deer permit through the current process.

After speaking with Bureau of Veteran's Services, we found that our current criteria (which requires a veteran who has a service connected disability of 50% or more to meet eligibility) for complimentary licenses and permits to veterans is very different than the title for this bill which suggests that it would apply to only combat-injured veterans. There is not an easy way to determine if a person is a combat-injured veteran. If the Committee decides to move forward with this bill we would suggest that the same criteria, currently being used also be applied for this initiative.

The Department looks forward to working with the Committee on this concept legislation. I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.