

**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. 650**

An Act To Strengthen Maine's Landowner Relations Program

SPONSORED BY: Representative Corey of Windham

CO-SPONSORED BY: Senator BREEN of Cumberland
Senator DIAMOND of Cumberland
Senator DILL of Penobscot
Representative BLIER of Buxton
Representative KESCHL of Belgrade
Representative MAREAN of Hollis
Representative MARTIN of Sinclair
Representative NADEAU of Winslow
Representative STERNS of Guilford

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Judy Camuso, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking neither for nor against to **L.D. 650**.

This bill aims to provide (5) deputy game wardens to strengthen the Landowner Relations Program.

I would like to thank the bill sponsor for the support of the Landowner Relations Program. Although we appreciate the support to the Landowner Program, we cannot fully support the bill at this time. The public use of private land is a critical issue affecting all who recreate in Maine. As the new Commissioner, I would like time to consider all options, by reviewing the Maine Land Conservation Task Force recommendations, consult with the Landowner and Sportsmen Advisory Board, and speak with Governor Mills regarding the future for the Departments Landowner Relations Program. I believe a full review of program priorities will better inform the next steps. The Department has a very effective program now and I look forward to making it even stronger!

I would be glad to answer any questions now or during the work session.