Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Testimony in Opposition to LD 439

"An Act To Preserve Maine's Sporting Heritage And Enhance Sporting Opportunities For Maine's Youth By Allowing Maine's Youth To Hunt On Sunday"

April 3, 2025
Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Good morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I'm Patrick Strauch, the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. Since 1961, the Maine Forest Products Council has represented our state's diverse forest products community, including logging contractors, sawmills, paper mills, biomass energy facilities, pellet manufacturers, furniture manufacturers and the owners of more than eight million acres of commercial forestland in Maine. I am here today to speak on behalf of the Council in opposition to LD 439, "An Act to Preserve Maine's Sporting Heritage and Enhance Sporting Opportunities for Maine's Youth by Allowing Maine's Youth to Hunt on Sunday."

Sunday hunting has been banned in Maine since 1883. As legislators have been told over and over, many Mainers would like one day of the week to enjoy the Maine outdoors without hunters nearby. Many hunters feel the same, and even those who would enjoy hunting on Sunday do not want to risk unhappy landowners across the state posting their land.

In 2022, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife conducted a study to determine the desire of Mainers with regards to Sunday hunting. What they found is that 69% of participants felt that it is important to keep one day per week during hunting season when non-hunters can utilize the woods. When asked about Sunday hunting directly, only 34% of the general population supports it while 54% opposes it.

The survey also found that landowners who allow access today for all forms of recreation are more likely to post their land if hunting on Sundays is permitted.

Maine's landowners already provide many opportunities for recreation, especially in the north Maine woods. We allow use of our private road systems, and we have a minimal number of hunting leases, which are customary in many other states. We pay a Forestry Excise Tax that covers the cost of 40% of the MFS fire suppression expenses even though the number of fires created by the visiting public has increased. We have a variety of public user groups, each experiencing the private forest in their own way, so, we strongly support preserving the tradition of no hunting on Sunday.

The system in place has served Maine well for 138 years. For these reasons, the Maine Forest Products Council urges you to vote **'Ought Not to Pass'** on LD 439. Thank you for your consideration.

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