

Testimony of Becky Morrell, Associate Lobbyist, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

Testimony in Support

LD 1653, An Act to Make Fisheries and Wildlife Projects Eligible for Tax Increment Financing

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

Presented by Becky Morrell, Associate Lobbyist, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

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Senator Courtney, Representative Knight, members of the Taxation Committee, I am Becky Morrell, associate lobbyist for the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine. First I would like to thank Senate President Kevin Raye for sponsoring this SAM legislation; we appreciate his continued support of our outdoor sporting community.

Maine is a very large rural state with high costs to doing business. In some cases for small rural communities attracting jobs is nearly impossible. One sector, energy development is bucking the trend and actually growing and expanding job opportunities in economically distressed areas like Washington County. Unfortunately, some regions of the state rely almost exclusively on natural resources and when considering Tax Increment Financing, we at SAM believe on occasion, these communities may want to consider projects like, protecting deer yards, developing put and take family fishing opportunities, habitat enhancement, etc.

There are some that interpret the current TIF laws to allow this type of activity, but to be honest it is unclear and we believe very few municipalities understand this type of option exists.

The current TIF law is designed to address the negative impacts of development in TIF districts and is focused almost exclusively on infrastructure or facilities projects. We believe for some communities, natural resources are the infrastructure and properly developed are as important as roads and sewer system investment.

Allowing this type of project into the TIF system will ensure the general awareness is raised that these types of projects are allowed and available.