

**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. 1015

An Act to Expand Crossbow Hunting

PRESENTED BY: Representative WOOD of Sabattus

COSPONSORED BY: Representative SHORT of Pittsfield

DATE OF HEARING: April 23, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Jim Connolly, Wildlife Division Director at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking **NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST L.D. 1015**.

L.D. 1015 would modify existing law and allow hunting with a crossbow during any season where hand-held bows are allowed.

From a biological standpoint this change does not increase bag limits for any of the current seasons. However, from a social perspective this bill would increase the number of hunters afield. Increases in harvest that result from this change should be able to be adjusted for within existing management systems. Based on the experience of other states where the use of a crossbow does not allow a hunter to take a second deer and firearms seasons for deer are lengthy like Maine's we would expect the following to occur if this bill is enacted:

1. Some archery hunters will switch from hand-held bows to crossbows.
2. Some new hunters that have never hunted with hand-held bows will take up crossbow hunting during the October archery season.
3. Crossbows will provide increased hunting method opportunity for hunters as they age. Other state's license sale data clearly show as hunter's age, crossbows become more attractive.
4. The total archery harvest will increase as participation by crossbow hunters increases.

The Department is currently supporting a bill (LD 540- an act to clarify shooting too close to a dwelling) that enhances 12 Section 11209 - Discharge of firearm or crossbow near dwelling or building to include projectiles. The intent of Section 11209 was to create a safety zone around residential buildings. Currently, a person can stand 100 yards from a dwelling and shoot an animal that is 10 feet from someone's home. LD 540 would eliminate this loop hole and support the intent of the law. Striking the crossbow from this section as part of LD 1015 would allow this unsafe practice. The elimination of the setback distance from dwellings for the use of crossbows may cause some landowners to restrict access to their property and support unethical and unsafe hunting practices. To

minimize the loss of access for hunting, should this change be enacted crossbow hunters should be encouraged to “Ask First” before hunting on property they don’t own.

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