

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 477**

LD TITLE: AN ACT TO EXPAND WILD TURKEY HUNTING

PRESENTED BY: Representative Hickman of Winthrop

CO-SPONSORED BY: Representative JONES of Freedom

Representative MARKS of Pittston

Representative RUSSELL of Portland

DATE OF HEARING: April 2, 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 in opposition to **L.D. 143**.

L.D. 477 directs the commissioner to establish an open season for wild turkeys during October with no bag limit.

The department is opposed to this bill because it does not allow the department to manage the wild turkey population in Maine based on biological principles and sound science. The department is aware of the Legislature's desire to expand turkey hunting to provide additional hunting opportunity, control the turkey population and help address nuisance issues. Under this bill the department would not be allowed to establish or vary the bag limit for turkeys within Wildlife Management Districts based on population information. This bill mandates an approach across the state that is excessive and prohibits adjustments based on changes in the turkey population. The department would suggest that by implementing the Turkey Working Group's recommendations through rule-making we can provide additional turkey hunting opportunity and an increased harvest while retaining the tools necessary for the department to manage wild turkeys.

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