

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1322

H.P. 857

House of Representatives, March 27, 2025

Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Enhance Youth Hunting Participation

Reference to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative ROBERTS of South Berwick.
Cosponsored by Senator GUERIN of Penobscot and
Representatives: BRIDGEO of Augusta, CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham, COLLAMORE of
Pittsfield, DILL of Old Town, JULIA of Waterville, MASON of Lisbon, MASTRACCIO of
Sanford.

1 **Sec. 1. Youth participation in hunting pilot program. Resolved:** That the
2 Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, referred to in this resolve as "the department,"
3 in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office
4 of Tourism, shall establish through rulemaking a 2-year pilot program to increase youth
5 participation in hunting. The program must include expanded youth hunting seasons and
6 outreach initiatives.

7 **Sec. 2. Program components. Resolved:** That the 2-year pilot program under
8 section 1 consists of the following components.

9 1. The department shall schedule the youth spring wild turkey hunting day pursuant to
10 the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 11701, subsection 3 during a period with
11 increased availability for youth hunters, such as a long weekend, or the department may
12 establish a 2-day season on a Friday and Saturday.

13 2. The department shall establish a 2-day youth bear hunting season on a Friday and
14 Saturday during a time when youth are more likely to be able to participate, such as late
15 summer or early fall.

16 3. The department shall establish a day for youth hunting with dogs prior to the start
17 of the regular season for hunting with dogs pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title
18 12, section 11251, subsection 1.

19 4. The pilot program must include a robust public relations and social media campaign
20 aimed at increasing awareness of youth hunting opportunities and promoting responsible
21 and safe hunting practices.

22 5. The pilot program must include collaboration with community organizations,
23 schools and outdoor retailers to host informational and educational events.

24 6. The department must invite the participation of hunting organizations, local
25 communities and conservation groups to ensure the pilot program meets community and
26 environmental standards.

27 **Sec. 3. Rules. Resolved:** That the department, in collaboration with the Department
28 of Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourism, shall adopt rules to
29 implement the 2-year pilot program under section 1, including but not limited to setting
30 specific dates for the pilot program and establishing participation guidelines and reporting
31 requirements. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined
32 in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

33 **Sec. 4. Report. Resolved:** That the department shall report annually on the
34 implementation of the 2-year pilot program under section 1 to the joint standing committee
35 of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters. The report
36 must include:

- 37 1. Participation data and demographic trends;
38 2. Feedback from participants and stakeholders;
39 3. The pilot program's impact on youth engagement and conservation awareness; and
40 4. Recommendations for pilot program continuation, modification or termination.

Sec. 5. Legislation. Resolved: That the department may submit legislation based on department findings during the 2-year pilot program under section 1 to the session of the Legislature immediately following the conclusion of the pilot program.

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourism, to establish through department rulemaking a 2-year pilot program, including expanded youth hunting seasons and outreach initiatives, to increase youth participation in hunting. The department is required to report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters on the implementation of the pilot program and is authorized to submit legislation based on the pilot program findings after the conclusion of the pilot program.