

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 692

H.P. 504

House of Representatives, March 4, 2021

An Act To Establish the Operation Game Thief Fund and Allow an Applicant for a State Hunting or Fishing License To Make a Donation To Prevent Illegal Hunting and Fishing

Received by the Clerk of the House on March 2, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative ORDWAY of Standish.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §10268** is enacted to read:

3 **§10268. Operation Game Thief Fund**

4 The Operation Game Thief Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established
5 within the department as a nonlapsing fund to be used by the commissioner to fund or assist
6 in funding an organization whose primary purpose is to prevent illegal hunting and fishing
7 and the unlawful introduction of nonnative fish to lakes, ponds and streams in this State by
8 offering rewards to individuals who report illegal hunting and fishing. The commissioner
9 shall establish on the department's online licensing system a check-off option that allows a
10 person to donate money to the fund. The check-off option must be prominently displayed
11 and contain links to information about how the check-off revenues have been and will be
12 used. The commissioner also shall print in a prominent place on every paper application
13 for a hunting license and for a fishing license a check-off option that allows a person to
14 donate money to the fund. Revenues from the checkoffs must be deposited in the fund and
15 used for purposes of this section. The commissioner may accept and deposit into the fund
16 monetary gifts, donations or other contributions from public or private sources for the
17 purposes specified in this section. The fund must be held separate and apart from all other
18 money, funds and accounts. The department shall report annually to the joint standing
19 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters
20 on the fund and its utilization.

21 **SUMMARY**

22 This bill creates the Operation Game Thief Fund within the Department of Inland
23 Fisheries and Wildlife in order to collect money donated through a voluntary check-off
24 system on state hunting and fishing licenses to support organizations that work to prevent
25 poaching and the introduction of nonnative fish to lakes, ponds and streams in Maine by
26 offering rewards to individuals who report violations. It also directs the Commissioner of
27 Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish the check-off system on the online and paper
28 hunting and fishing license applications.