

# OPPOSE

## **LD1242 -An Act To Restore the Deer Herd in Certain Wildlife Management Districts in Maine**

**Sponsor:** Representative BURNS of Whiting

**Co-Sponsors:** Representatives Ayotte of Caswell, Clark of Millinocket, Davis of Sangerville, Fitts of Pittsfield, and Senators Thomas of Somerset and Trahan of Lincoln

**Summary:** This bill would raise funds for the management of deer populations in Maine, generating revenue from a deer stamp for hunters, a new voluntary license plate, and a new voluntary check-off on tax forms. It creates a new deer management advisory committee. It authorizes the use of some of the funds raised to support efforts to remove the Canada lynx from the federal Endangered Species list.

**Explanation:** Maine's deer populations in northern, eastern and western Maine have been declining for several decades, primarily as a result of the loss of deer wintering habitat. There are a number of bills this session aimed at increasing the size of the deer herd in those areas, primarily for the benefit of hunters and the local economy that relies on hunters.

This bill would raise funds to protect deer habitat, which is a worthy cause that NRCM supports. Habitat that protects deer herds also will protect other species. However, embedded in this bill is the authority (Sec. 10263) for the state to use the funds raised to actively oppose protection for the federal protected Canada lynx. The Canada lynx has been designated a "Threatened" species by the federal government, due to its very low population. Maine is the only state in the eastern United States to still have breeding Canada lynx.

NRCM opposes efforts by the state to remove protections for the threatened Canada lynx. The following language in Sec. 10263. Maine Deer Management Fund, would need to be removed for NRCM to support this bill:

Funds may be used to cover costs incurred by the State in obtaining an incidental take permit from the Federal Government for the Canadian lynx and efforts to have the Canadian lynx delisted from the United States Endangered Species Act of 1973.

**NRCM opposes LD 1242, unless the provision that would weaken protections for Canada lynx is removed.**