Statement of David Trahan
Executive Director, Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine

Good afternoon, and thank you for coming.

My name is David Trahan, and I am the Executive Director of the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine. As you may have heard by now, the large, Washington D.C.-based Humane Society of the United States, under the disguise of an organization called Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting, is once again proposing a referendum to ban the use of all effective means to control Maine's bear population—baiting, hounding, and trapping.

HSUS seeks to do this on the tenth anniversary of when Maine voters rejected the very same proposal in 2004.

We oppose the proposed referendum for a variety of reasons, but most importantly, we believe it takes away the most effective tool for controlling Maine’s growing bear population according to our expert public biologists at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Proudly, Maine can claim that we have one of the most extensive, comprehensive and long-standing bear management and research programs in the country.

Without these management tools, we expect the number of human-bear encounters to increase substantially, resulting in an increased risk of property damage and human injury.

As proof of this, just this summer, we have watched as human and community black bear encounters have generated dozens of news stories in Maine and across the country. Just recently, Maine Game Wardens watch a neighborhood in Litchfield for nuisance bears, a principal in Kennebunk takes precautions with bear sightings near his school, and in Michigan, 12 year old Abby Wetherell was recently mauled by a black bear when jogging near her grandparents home. These are just a few examples of why scientific bear management is so critical.

Like ten years ago, we are excited to announce the formation of a broad coalition seeking to defeat the proposed referendum. You can find this coalition listed in your press packets as well as on our website at www.savemainesbearhunt.com. Among the members of this coalition are sporting organizations, dozens of policymakers and candidates for public office, landowner and recreation organizations, labor organizations and others. We appreciate that these leaders
and organizations have stepped up to publicly oppose this referendum, and encourage all Maine people to join the coalition.

It is truly sad to see that again this large out-of-state interest, HSUS, has come to Maine again to attempt to dictate how we manage our wildlife populations. We know these out of staters will once again spend millions of dollars to try to mislead voters by playing to their emotions. But once again, our campaign will be based on the facts, sound science and long-term research conducted by those who know the most about our bear population - the State's bear biologists.

The proposed referendum threatens rural economies and our hunting heritage, and undermines the expertise of our tremendous biologists at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. We strongly ask Maine people stand with us to oppose this referendum.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Commissioner Chandler Woodcock of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife who will speak to the Department's position on the proposed referendum.

Thank you.
Remarks of Joel Pitcher

Good Afternoon.

My name is Joel Pitcher and I am pleased to be able to stand here today on behalf of several of Maine’s labor unions in opposition to the proposed bear hunting referendum. We are excited to announce that the following organizations have already joined the coalition in opposition to the proposed referendum:

- Maine AFL-CIO
- IAMAW, District Lodge #4
- Maine State Council of Machinists

We expect many others will also join the campaign.

Maine’s outdoor tradition, and bear hunting in particular, is an important piece of our member’s social fabric. Union organizations across the country are recognizing the need to support sportsmen on a variety of issues from conservation, angling, youth engagement, and hunting.

The upcoming referendum that would ban bear baiting, hounding, and trapping undermines the professionalism and credentials of our biologists at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife by circumventing policy based upon training and sound science and implementing policy based on emotion and fear.

Maine’s rich outdoor heritage is largely supported by middle class Maine citizens who are able to spend time in the outdoors with their families. Passing this referendum would weaken Maine’s hunting community and lead to less hunting opportunities in the future. Guiding also represents a significant opportunity for working Maine families to realize a substantial portion of their annual income. Taking this opportunity away would only make it more difficult for many Maine working families to pay their bills and make end’s meet.

We encourage Maine voters to oppose the proposed referendum. Thank you.
Remarks of Don Kleiner, Executive Director of the Maine Professional Guides Association

Good Afternoon.

My name is Don Kleiner and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Professional Guides Association. Our association represents over 1,000 members- professional guides and outfitters that provide quality service, promote safety, obey laws, work with wildlife officials and landowners, and support numerous conservation and education programs.

We are proud to stand here today with our fellow coalition members, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and other supporters to oppose the proposed referendum that would ban bear baiting, hounding, and trapping.

For many of our members, Maine’s bear hunt is a critical component of their livelihood. Bear hunting brings jobs and income to a hard-pressed rural economy. In 2004, when an almost identical referendum was proposed to Maine voters, we learned that the State could lose between 563 and 770 existing jobs if the question were to pass. We also learned that up to $62.4 million in average annual economic activity could be lost and almost half of the bear guides in Maine would have to close their business.

It is no secret that the recent recession hit rural Maine and our small businesses hard. Taking away the economics of Maine’s bear hunt would only compound the difficulty that many of these businesses are experiencing today. That is truly sad when you consider the fact that many of these businesses are ambassadors for our State that provide quality experiences, contribute to our local communities, and help sustain a long and cherished outdoor heritage.

In closing, the proposed referendum is bad for Maine’s economy, bad for Maine communities, and bad for our outdoor heritage. We have a tremendous resource in our bear population and we depend on the biologists at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, to make bear management decisions that are best for the conservation of the species.

Thank you for coming and we look forward to working with you all in the months ahead to defeat this initiative.
Leadership Counts-Anti-Bear Referendum Coalition

In response to the recent announcement that the Humane Society of the United States is planning to gather signatures for another bear referendum to ban hounding, trapping and baiting, we have begun building a coalition to oppose the referendum. Many leaders and organizations are publicly opposing the bear referendum. If your legislator is on the list, please thank them. It takes a lot of courage to lead on such controversial issues, Democrats, Republicans and Un-enrolled alike are putting aside their political differences to support our hunting heritage. Thank you!

Organizations

Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, SAM
Maine Professional Guides Association
Maine Trapper’s Association, MTA
IAMAW, District Lodge #4
Safari Club International, Maine Chapter
Downeast Houndsmen
Maine Snowmobile Association
Maine Council AFL-CIO
United States Sportsman’s Alliance
Maine Bowhunter’s Association
National Rifle Association, NRA
Maine Farm Bureau
Maine Forest Products Council
Maine Sporting Dogs Association
Maine State Council of Machinists
Pine Tree Coon Cat & Bear Hunters

Candidates for Governor

Governor Paul LePage
Congressman Mike Michaud
Eliot Cutler
Candidates for Congress

Bruce Poliquin
Kevin Raye
Blaine Richardson
Richard Rosen
Senator Troy Jackson
Senator Emily Cain

Current State Senators and Representatives

Rep. Stacey Guerin (R-Glenburn)
Rep. Windol Weaver (R-York)
Rep. Jeffrey Evangelos (I-Friendship)
Sen. Troy Jackson (D-District 35)
Rep. Paul Gilbert (D-Jay)
Rep. Stephen Wood (R-Sabattus)
Sen. David Dutrumble (D-District 4)
Rep. Raymond Wallace (R-Dexter)
Rep. Jarrod Crockett (R-Bethel)
Rep. Walter Kurniaga (D-Deer Isle)
Rep. Thomas Tyler (R-Windham)
Sen. John Patrick (D-District 14)
Rep. Ellen Winchenbach (R-Waldoboro)
Sen. Colleen Lachowicz (D-District 25)
Rep. H. David Cota (R-China)
Rep. Dean Cray (R-Palmyra)
Rep. Eleanor Espling (R-New Gloucester)
Sen. David Burns (R-District 29)
Rep. Deborah Sanderson (R-Chelsea)
Rep. Dale Crafts (R-Lisbon)

Rep. Jeffery Gifford (R-Lincoln)
Rep. Ricky Long (R-Sherman)
Rep. Peter Johnson (R-Greenville)
Rep. Sheryl Briggs (D-Mexico)
Rep. Larry Dunphy (R-Emden)
Rep. Peter Doak (R-Columbia Falls)
Rep. Michael Shaw (D-Standish)
Rep. Joyce Maker (R-Calais)
Rep. Jeffery Timberlake (R-Turner)
Rep. Brian Duprey (R-Hampden)
Rep. Joyce Fitzpatrick (R-Houlton)
Rep. David Johnson (R-Eddington)
Rep. Tom Winsor (R-Norway)
Rep. Tyler Clark (R-Easton)
Rep. Brian Jones (D-Freedom)
Rep. Jethro Pease (R-Morrill)
Rep. James Gillway (R-Searsport)
Rep. Corey Wilson (R-Augusta)
Sen. Roger Katz (R-District 24)
Sen. Anne Haskell (D-District 9)
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<td>Sen. Andre Cushing (R-District 33)</td>
<td>Sen. Thomas Saviello (R-District 18)</td>
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<td>Rep. Tim Marks (D-Pittston)</td>
<td>Sen. Mike Thibodeau (R – District 23)</td>
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<td>Sen. Rodney Whittemore (R-Skowhegan)</td>
<td>Sen. Garrett Mason (R-Lisbon Falls)</td>
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<td>Rep. Lance Harvell (R-Farmington)</td>
<td>Sen. Edward Youngblood (R-Brewer)</td>
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<td>Rep. Dennis Keschi (R-Belgrade)</td>
<td>Rep. Roger Reed (R-Carmel)</td>
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<td>Rep. Amy Volk (R-Scarborough)</td>
<td>Senator Emily Cain (D-Orono)</td>
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<td><strong>Rep. Jeff McCabe (D-Skowhegan)</strong></td>
<td>Senator Roger Sherman (R-District 34)</td>
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**Bolded names indicate legislative leadership.**

**Outdoor Organizations**

Presque Isle Fish and Game Club  
Wiscasset Rod and Gun Club  
North Berwick Rod & Gun Club  
Penobscot Long Rifles  
Durham Rod and Gun Club  
Penobscot County Conservation Association
Black Bears Are Thriving in Maine
- Black bears are widely distributed in Maine.
- More than 30,000 bears occur statewide.
- Maine's bear population has increased 67% since 1990 in response to years of low harvest and high cub numbers.
- Maine has the largest bear population in the eastern United States and one of the largest in the continental U.S.
- IFW receives an average of 500 nuisance bear complaints each year; in 2012, 870 complaints were reported.

Maine Has a "State of the Art" Bear Management Program
- Maine has one of the most extensive, comprehensive, and longest standing bear studies in North America. It is based on wildlife management's most current, scientific methods.
- More than 3,000 bears have been captured and marked since 1975.
- Between 79 and 100 radio-collared bears are tracked annually; ~85 den sites are visited each winter.
- IFW collects detailed information on bear survival, birth rates, behavior, and animal condition.
- Information gathered from this study allows IFW to adjust the bear harvest to levels to meet bear population objectives and ensure the conservation of Maine's black bears.
- IFW has monitored bear harvests since 1969.
- As part of a periodic update to Maine's bear management plan, an integrated population model using this extensive data set is being developed.

Public Input Determines Black Bear Management Objectives
- In 1999, a public working group representing landowners, forest industry, sportsmen, environmentalists, etc., developed the following management objectives for 2000 through 2015:
  1. Stabilize the bear population through annual hunting and trapping harvests.
  2. Promote traditional hunting and trapping methods.
  3. Promote public tolerance of bears in Maine.

Regulated Hunting is the Primary Tool to Achieve Publics' Goals and Objectives
- To achieve publically derived population objectives and stabilize bear numbers, a harvest of 3,500 to 4,500 bears is need.
- Although Maine's bear harvest averaged 3,780 between 1999 and 2004, harvest has declined by 23% (averaged 2,910 bears annually) since 2005 and is attributed to a 24% decline in hunter numbers.
- Although hunting bear over bait is the most effective way to hunt bears in Maine and meet bear population objectives, other methods, including traps and hounds, are needed to reach objectives.
- Since 1999, between 368 and 623 bears were harvested each year with hounds or traps.
- Bear harvest rate by method has not changed since 1999:
  - Bait: 79% Incidental to deer hunting: 4%
  - Hounds: 11% Method unreported: 3%
  - Trapping: 3%
- Success rate of bear hunters using bait and hounds is about 30% each year and 19% using traps.
- By comparison, 79% of moose hunters, 38% of turkey hunters, and 14% of deer hunters were successful in 2012.
- Other bear hunting methods used in states that have restricted the use of bait and/or dogs may be unworkable and are likely impractical in Maine because of our terrain and thick vegetation.
- Bears can only regulate their numbers at extremely high population levels after becoming malnourished and fewer cubs are born and more cubs starved; conflicts between bears and people would also rise.

For more information, check our website: www.mefishwildlife.com Updated May 8, 2013
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