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Testimony In Support

LD 638, An Act To Legalize the Use of Supplemental Minerals to Assist with Wildlife Nutrition

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Presented by David Trahan, Executive Director of the SAM Institute for Legislative Action

February 25, 2019

The honorable Senator Dill, Representative Nadeau, members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, my name is David Trahan, Executive Director of the SAM Institute for Legislative Action and I am testifying in support of this SAM ILA bill, LD 638, An Act to Legalize the Use of Supplemental Minerals to Assist with Wildlife Nutrition. First I would like to thank you Senator Davis for submitting this bill.

Just a few years ago, the department suggested banning the supplemental feeding of deer. Obviously, it passed, but, most people did not know the language of that legislation also banned supplemental minerals. This legislation attempts to clarify whether the legislative intent was to include mineral supplements in that previous legislation.

After consultation with our consulting biologist, Gerry Lavigne, on the benefits of supplemental minerals, we decided to introduce this bill in an attempt to increase deer and fawn survival at a critical time of year, just after winter, when deer are at their most vulnerable. There is a reason moose and deer migrate to the edge of the road to seek out salt and other minerals, their bodies have been seriously depleted of nutrients and minerals crucial to survival. Some would argue mineral blocks congregate deer where they might be in jeopardy of transmitting disease. True, but if this committee is concerned about disease, my question would be, is there another way to provide these types of life saving minerals?

We are not interested in aiding in the spread of disease, just looking for a way to assist in the health of our deer and moose herd. I hope the committee will at least explore the idea, if there is no viable option, then we will look for another way.