



Department of Fish and Wildlife

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

FROM: Andrea Shortsleeve, Interim Commissioner
Department of Fish and Wildlife

SUBJECT: Support for H.231 & S.32

DATE: May 1, 2025

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for taking testimony on H.231 – An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife. The Department of Fish and Wildlife strongly supports this bill; we feel that it is good governance and is good for the people and wildlife of Vermont. It will eliminate inconsistencies between Vermont statute and Vermont and Federal regulations. Additionally, this bill will improve the ability of law enforcement to implement regulations. The Department provided the as-introduced language to the legislature for introduction, and we support the bill in its current form.

Additionally, thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.32 – An act relating to providing a free fishing license to persons with developmental disabilities. The Department of Fish & Wildlife supports S.32 as written. Our Department exists to improve the quality of life for all Vermonters. We have a long history of providing free fishing licenses to people with physical and developmental disabilities including group home residents, disabled veterans, participants in Special Olympics fishing events, and people who are blind or paraplegics. We are acutely aware that these free licenses have the potential to reduce revenues for the Department, and our budget is far from robust. However, our Department was not created to sell licenses; we were created for the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont. This includes providing sustainable, wildlife- and fish-based recreational opportunities.

We appreciate the support of the Administration and the Legislature in the form of General Funds to aid in the support this broad mission, as we could not carry out all of the important work of the Department on license sales alone. We anticipate that this bill will have a very small impact on our Department's budget but



Protecting and conserving our fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.

could have a very large impact on the quality of life for Vermonters with developmental disabilities. In short, we think this is the right thing to do.

Again, thank you for taking up these bills and for inviting Department staff in for testimony on it. We are available for any additional testimony desired and to answer any questions that committee members may have.

Respectfully,



Andrea Shortsleeve, Interim Commissioner
Department of Fish and Wildlife