Lodge Moose Permit Program

Summary

1. The Lodge Moose Permit Program is emergency stimulus legislation to address the sustainability of Maine sporting camps and wilderness lodges while providing for critical state revenues – sales tax, income tax and license fees. The intent is to generate a financial stimulus trickle-down effect to rural communities by generating sales for local businesses and increasing employment in these communities. Helping rural Maine.

2. The revenue opportunities will support Maine businesses with a material investment in rural areas and provide the incentive for these businesses to improve and expand their facilities and thus enhance employment, the tax base, income tax, and sales tax revenues.

3. Historically the deer hunt has been a primary revenue driver which offsets the high costs of operations in a remote area. In the past decade, however, the deer herd has declined dramatically with a concurrent loss of bookings. Recovery is only a distant possibility. Thus, many lodges are operating at a loss and their futures are in jeopardy. The State needs to act to preserve these destination resorts and to help prevent their deterioration. Especially in areas where the deer herd is compromised.

“Lodge Tags” Distribution

The following outlines the details pertaining to distribution and qualification:

Permits reserved for lodges: Ten percent of the prior year’s aggregate permit allocation shall be reserved for the lodges with a minimum of 250. In 2013, 250 permits shall be allocated.

Eligible Lodges: State Department of Health licensed eating and lodging facilities offering American-Plan fully-guided moose hunting packages (Eligible Lodges) would qualify to act as agent for Lodge Tags.

1. In consideration for offering a client a Tag, the client shall also purchase a fully-guided American-Plan lodging and guiding package. A registered Maine Guide shall be engaged with each hunt.

2. An Eligible Lodge must have guided at least two such hunts in the prior year, except;
   a. An otherwise Eligible Lodge which has not guided two hunts in the prior year may contract with an experienced registered Maine Guide or outfitter, and
   b. Such lodge shall obtain an affidavit and proof from the guide or outfitter that consideration was paid for guiding services for at least two moose hunts during the prior 5 years.

Application Process: Each Eligible Lodge seeking to become an agent for Lodge Tags shall make an application to the Department in a form to demonstrate the lodge meets the qualifications.
1. Such application shall make request for the number of Tags the Eligible Lodge is seeking to sell with a minimum of one. However, Eligible Lodges may not request more Tags than the number of American-plan fully-guided moose hunts conducted in the prior year.

2. A non-refundable fee of $25 shall accompany the application.

3. An additional non-refundable Tag fee for one Tag shall be submitted at the time of application. The Eligible Lodge may transfer the Tag to a client as discussed below.

4. All applications and program communications with lodges shall be conducted by email or fax.

**Tag Distribution:** Each Eligible Lodge shall qualify to act as agent for a minimum of one Tag, providing sufficient Tags are available.

1. Should the number of Eligible Lodges making application exceed the annual allocation, the available Tags shall be allocated to applicants by lottery. Any applicant who does not get a Tag shall get a full refund of advance fees.

2. On the other hand if Tags remain after each applicant receives one, the Department shall distribute the remaining on a weighted average basis related to Tags requested. [*Alternatively, the remaining Tags may be pooled for a sealed-bid auction to applicants and conducted by the Department under comparable procedures in place for the current “Governor Tags”.]*

3. The Department shall determine which lodges are allocated Tags no later than December 31 of the year preceding the season in order to allow time for Eligible Lodges to market their Tags at the trade shows.

4. The Permits shall be valid in any zone in which at least 75 permits were allocated in the previous year as part of the recreational moose lottery process and during any season moose hunting is authorized.

5. Each client obtaining a Tag from an Eligible Lodge shall be issued an applicable permit upon request to the Department providing such request is made no later than 72 hours before the start of the season (week) the subject hunt will take place.

6. Non-performance: should any lodge fail to pay for Tags applied for by July 15 it shall forfeit its options for Tags and be prohibited from participation in the program for 12 months. Tags forfeited shall immediately be offered to applicants with unfilled requests by lottery.

**Tag Duration and Transferability:** The Tags would be transferable until the permit is issued as discussed above and valid for one time use during the current season or the next season on an American-Plan fully-guided hunt within the Eligible Lodge’s zone or in up to two eligible contiguous zones. (*Many out-of-state hunters plan hunts more than a year in advance. Offering a good lead time helps eliminate conflicts and maximizes the value of the permits.*)