

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bear hunting has \$52.7 million impact on Maine's economy

AUGUSTA -- A new economic study prepared for the Maine Office of Tourism and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife reveals that bear hunting and related activities has a significant impact on Maine's economy, especially in rural parts of the state, where economic opportunities are far and few between.

The analysis, prepared by Southwick Associates, shows that total spending by bear hunters in Maine totalled slightly more than \$53 million, including resident and non-resident hunters in 2013.

According to the analysis, bear hunting has an impact on 565 jobs in Maine.

Don Kleiner, executive director of the Maine Professional Guides Association, said passage of a referendum that would place new restrictions on bear hunting in Maine would be an economic disaster for small business owners, especially in rural Maine.

"In the last few weeks, folks in northern Maine have been dealt two very harsh economic blows," Kleiner said. "We're seeing paper mills close in Millinocket and Bucksport and now we're facing the prospect of removing another \$52 million from the fragile economy. That just doesn't make sense."

Al Cowperthwaite, Executive Director of North Maine Woods Inc., a professional forest recreation management company, agrees with Kleiner.

"I talk frequently with about 115 sporting camp owners and guiding business owners located in Northern Maine who tell me that the future of their businesses is directly tied to the outcome of the referendum," Cowperthwaite said. "Bear hunting related income is close to 40 to 50 percent of total income for many of these family-owned businesses. If they are no longer able to hold bear hunts, income from guiding fishermen and moose, deer and partridge hunters will not sustain them."

Question One opponents say the impact on Maine's economy is likely of little concern to the Humane Society of the United States, a Washington, D.C. based special interests group that has been funding and pushing for passage of the referendum.

“All you need to do is to pick up a newspaper to understand how tough Maine’s economy is right now,” said James Cote, Campaign Manager for the NO on One campaign. “But if you’re a Washington D.C. lobbying organization, you don’t need to worry about Maine’s economy.”

The report is attached to this email and can also be found at:

http://visitmaine.com/assets/downloads/ME_Hunt_Economics%20Final%20Report%2010-06-2014.pdf

The Save Maine’s Bear Hunt/NO on 1 Campaign has invited Southwick Associates, the economic researchers who developed the report to participate in a telephone conference on Wednesday, October 15 at 9:00a to provide an overview of the bear hunting figures and answer any questions that media representatives may have. To dial in, please call in tomorrow, Wednesday, October 15 at 9:00a to the following numbers:

**Dial in number: (605) 562-0020
Passcode: 198-885-697**

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