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JOINT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO EXPEDITE THE INCIDENTAL TAKE PERMIT FOR COYOTES

WE, your Memorialists, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Maine now assembled in the First Regular Session, most respectfully present and petition the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service as follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has long been famous for its magnificent wilderness and natural beauty and its plentiful game, fish and birds and, with these natural riches, Maine is a haven for vacationers, campers, hunters, anglers, outdoor sports enthusiasts and recreationists; and

WHEREAS, Maine has a long and important tradition of deer hunting for food and sport stretching back thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, the deer population in areas of Maine has been severely threatened and diminished and one known reason is the growth in the number of coyotes, which had not been in Maine for thousands of years and returned in the 1960s and 1970s; and

WHEREAS, Maine's game management strategy has always been focused on preserving the healthy population of game and keeping a balance of prey and predator and a professionally structured coyote snaring program was created by statute to assist in the recovery of the deer population; and

WHEREAS, the program, which appeared to be making a contribution to the lowering of deer winter mortality, was suspended when Maine's Attorney General advised that any incidental taking by snarers of Canada lynx, a species listed on the federal threatened species list, might open the State to legal liability; and

WHEREAS, to reimplement the program, Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife must apply to the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service for an incidental take permit and show proof that conservation activity in Maine in protecting our deer outweighs any potential harm to the Canada lynx population, which has rebounded; and

WHEREAS, Maine is not interested in destroying one species in order to save another and it is thought that the Canada lynx population is thriving in Maine as it is in Canada, where there is a bounty on lynx, and the incidental snaring of lynx in Maine would not threaten the population of lynx in Maine or Canada; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service expedite the incidental take permit for our State and allow us to manage our wildlife properly and successfully; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and to each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.