

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is D. Gordon Mott. I live in Lakeville in Eastern Penobscot County. I have been testifying here almost every year on coyote topics for about 45 years. Some of you will remember those early years when coyotes were a new dangerous mystery in Maine. My wife and I kept both sheep and coyotes in those years and have some understanding of the realities. I am testifying Neither For nor Against on LD 716.

You all know that coyotes today have developed to be a normal environmental member of Maine's Wildlife. The current Maine coyote hunting law was established in that early period of mystery and fear. When you look at it, you find that the law supports the most excessive intrusion to private property for any hunting reason there is in Maine. Hunters can hunt private property every day and night throughout the whole year except Sunday. Hunters can use lights at night to scan private property for targets. Hunters can use killing dogs that can't read signs to intrude on private property throughout the seasons when young wildlife are being born and raised.

You also know that there are politically important alliances that support sport hunters who want to be able to go wherever they can all year round to hunt day and night. There are those who believe that predator control helps increase the abundance of deer. And there are those with legitimate concerns with the safety of pets and livestock who want coyotes on and near their property killed.

There are also those who know that on a sound scientific basis established over more than a century of attempts to control coyotes that control by killing is as effective as trying to control sea level rise by bailing the ocean. Coyotes respond to removals by increasing the birth rate.

You might also know that there are some who positively want coyotes to be present to help protect vegetable crops from browsing by deer. There are some foresters like myself who want deer reduced or inhibited in some places for silvicultural reasons so that good regeneration of valuable hardwoods like red oak and sugar maple can be protected from elimination by deer and turkeys. There are some landowners who really appreciate having coyotes to help reduce populations of tick-bearing mice and feral cats and to protect their gardens.

You also know that landowners have the option to post their land if they want to exclude hunters - at a cost of time and money that exceeds the cost of hunting license.

And there are landowners who don't want hunters night and day all year round who are willing to leave their lands open, unposted, to allow traditional bird and deer seasons.

I understand that you will hear serious opposition to this proposal to close the season and that there will be serious, valid reservations on your part with which I can concur.

I ask then in conclusion as I testify neither-for-nor-against, that finally after all these years of unrest by landowners and this long continuation of a serious injustice, you seriously conclude there is a solution. The solution is to require coyote hunters to get landowner permission to hunt coyotes on private property at night at any time year round, and in the day in any way, at any time outside fall bird and deer hunting season. Leave provisions for hunting raccoons and bobcats etc. in their seasons alone.

That way, those who want to hunt for sport or for other reasons will continue to be able to do as they wish in all those places where they get permission, and landowners who want peace and quiet

and to leave their land open for hunting in traditional bird and deer season will leave land unposted. As it is, more and more properties are being and will be posted.

Many, many, Maine landowners are continuing, right now today as we speak, to be burdened by this deeply unjust, untraditional, excessive, ineffective privilege that is extended to hunters to intrude with firearms night and day all year round on their lands.

This injustice is in your hands. Please, please, by ammendment to LD 716 bring justice now at

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Gordon Mott".

this time to all Maine private landowners while at the same time preserving with balance the privilege that Maine hunters want.

Sincerely, with respect,

D. Gordon Mott