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Testimony of Representative Dylan Pugh in support of
LD 716, An Act to Restrict the Hunting of Coyotes
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, I am Dylan Pugh and I represent House District 114, which includes part of Portland. I am here today to testify in support of **LD 716, An Act to Restrict the Hunting of Coyotes**.

I want to emphasize that the goal of this legislation is not to increase the population of coyotes, nor is it intended to ban coyote hunting. This bill is designed to be a small step toward promoting stewardship and ecosystem balance.

It may sound counterintuitive, but there is a significant amount of scientific evidence that shows that coyote hunting can actually increase coyote abundance, not decrease it. A 2025 study found that “coyote abundance was higher where human hunting was permitted,” stating that “directly hunting coyotes does not decrease their abundance and may actually increase it.”¹

While I agree that there is an overabundance of coyotes in our local ecosystems, hunting them is not the solution to that problem. As a 2017 study noted, “direct persecution aimed to reduce their populations may have the reverse effect, possibly due to more immigrants filling the territories vacated by hunted animals.”²

By placing guardrails around coyote hunting, we are promoting balance and biodiversity in our ecosystems.

I encourage you to consider what is best for local ecosystems, and not allow for unintended coyote growth in Maine communities by voting ought to pass for LD 716.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Moll, R.J., Green, A.M., Allen, M.L. and Kays, R. (2025), People or predators? Comparing habitat-dependent effects of hunting and large carnivores on the abundance of North America's top mesocarnivore. *Ecography*, 2025: e07390.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ecog.07390>

² Kays, R., Parsons, A.W., Baker, M.C., Kalies, E.L., Forrester, T., Costello, R., Rota, C.T., Millsaugh, J.J. and McShea, W.J. (2017), Does hunting or hiking affect wildlife communities in protected areas?. *J Appl Ecol*, 54: 242-252.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.12700>