

Chelsea Ehret
Millinocket
LD 1293

TESTIMONY OF Chelsea Ehret
In SUPPORT of LD 1293 “An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine”
Committee of Inland Fisheries Wildlife
April 2, 2025

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee. My name is Chelsea Ehret and I am from Millinocket. I write today in strong support of the proposed legislation to prohibit coyote killing contests in Maine. These contests are not in line with Maine’s long-standing traditions of ethical hunting, conservation, and respect for wildlife. Rather than serving any legitimate wildlife management purpose, these events encourage indiscriminate slaughter for cash prizes and bragging rights, tarnishing the reputation of responsible hunters and undermining public trust in conservation efforts.

Mass killing of coyotes is ineffective at controlling their populations or increasing deer numbers. Coyotes have evolved to compensate for population losses by increasing their reproductive rates, and when one group is removed, others quickly move in. Factors such as habitat loss and harsh winters play a far greater role in deer population declines than predation by coyotes.

Beyond the ecological concerns, coyotes play a critical role in maintaining balance in Maine’s natural landscapes. As apex predators in our ecosystem, they help control rodent populations, reduce the spread of Lyme disease by preying on small mammals that carry infected ticks, and regulate herbivore populations to prevent overgrazing. Stable coyote populations also benefit farmers by keeping deer moving more often, which prevents them from devastating crops and by naturally deterring other predators from livestock areas.

This legislation is not about banning hunting. It is about ending an extreme and unethical practice that does not reflect the values of most Mainers, including many in the hunting community. These contests do not represent responsible wildlife stewardship, and their continuation damages both our natural world and our shared sense of ethical responsibility.

I urge you to support this bill and protect Maine’s wildlife, ecosystems, and hunting traditions from the harm caused by these contests. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Ehret
Millinocket