

Dennis Morelli  
Palermo  
LD 1293

TESTIMONY OF Dennis Morelli  
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 Dennis Morelli and I reside in Palermo. I am a member of the state’s Animal Welfare Advisory Committee representing animal advocacy groups, a certified animal control officer, and manager at a farmed animal shelter.

At our state licensed and internationally accredited shelters, we care for over 625 rescued farmed animals—vulnerable beings who rely on us for their safety and wellbeing. Like many rural properties, we have had coyotes on and around our land. However, we have successfully deterred them for many years using non-lethal, humane methods such as motion-activated lights, predator deterrent lights, fencing, and noisemakers. All of our animals have immediate access to barns and the most susceptible (birds, rabbits, goats, sheep, or any other vulnerable animal) are kept indoors at night in well-constructed barns. In doing so, we have demonstrated that coexistence with coyotes is not only possible, but practical. We have been in operation since 2001 and have never had one of our animals attacked or killed by a coyote.

We understand the concerns of property owners and animal guardians, but encouraging the indiscriminate slaughter of coyotes through killing contests is not a responsible or effective solution. These contests are not rooted in science or conservation; they promote a culture of violence, disregard the ecological role of coyotes, and can actually increase conflict by destabilizing pack dynamics and leading to more breeding.

As a shelter that values compassion and ethical stewardship, we believe wildlife deserves the same thoughtful consideration as our rescued animals. Coyotes are sentient, social creatures who play an important role in maintaining the balance of Maine’s ecosystems. Reckless contests that reward the mass killing of these animals for prizes and bragging rights are inhumane and out of step with Maine’s values.

LD 1293 does not prohibit hunting or the responsible management of wildlife. It simply puts an end to a particularly cruel and unnecessary practice that has no place in modern wildlife policy. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and help Maine lead with integrity, compassion, and science-based decision-making.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,  
Dennis Morelli  
Palermo, Maine