

Janet Lynch
Pownal
LD 1293

TESTIMONY OF JANET LYNCH

In SUPPORT of LD 1293 "An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine" Committee of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife 2 April, 2025

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee. My name is Janet Lynch and I am from Pownal.

As a landowner interested in maintaining the ecological balance in Maine's ecosystems, and as a Mainer who cares about fair hunting practices, I strongly urge you to support this bill. I recognise the importance of coyotes as an integral element in Maine's ecosystems, and I oppose contests which encourage wanton killing for killing's sake.

The bill in no way prohibits legitimate hunting as per section 3. It is narrowly written to specifically prohibit the wanton slaughter of coyotes in killing contests. As the Summary states, "It specifies that the law prohibiting coyote-killing contests may not be construed to prohibit the defense of a person or property or a government employee's sanctioned culling of coyotes."

Wildlife killing contests promote disrespect for nature and violence, are ecologically destructive, and deeply unpopular with the public. They remove any notion of fair chase, ignore hunting ethics, and send a message that it is fun to thoughtlessly kill large numbers of animals for the sake of killing, without a thought to ecosystem impacts. Such thinking led to the extinction of the passenger pigeon, and the near extinction of the American bison (among others), and is utterly antithetical to Maine's traditional fair hunting ethics. Because killing contests encourage unsportsmanlike behavior and attract negative public attention, ethical hunters oppose them.

Such contests are also ineffective: left to their own devices, coyotes normally avoid humans, but the mass killing of coyotes can encourage breeding and migration, thereby destabilizing populations and increasing the likelihood of conflicts with humans.

Those who claim that coyotes are an invasive species ignore the fact that these native North American canids fill an ecological gap left by wolves, which have been locally hunted to extinction. Coyotes and other natural predators are essential to the healthy functioning of ecosystems. Without them, rodents and herbivores overpopulate, with negative impacts for human health, forests and farms. Coyotes also help to remove carrion and improve the gene pool of herbivores by removing the sick and the weak.

As natural predators, coyotes are essential to the healthy functioning of Maine's ecosystems. Killing contests which encourage their indiscriminate eradication are misguided and dangerous. They undermine public morals by teaching a disrespect, even contempt for nature, and give hunters a bad name. This bill, which specifically bans destructive, unpopular killing contests, in no way limits legitimate hunting or culling of coyotes. LD 1293 OUGHT TO PASS.