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AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Lynne A. Williams

13 Albert Meadow
Bar Harbor, ME 04609
Phone: (207) 266-6327
Lynne.Williams@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Rep. Lynne Williams presenting
LD 814, An Act to Restrict the Daytime and Nighttime Killing of Coyotes
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Good afternoon, Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am Representative Lynne Williams, and I am here today to present **LD 814, An Act to Restrict the Daytime and Nighttime Killing of Coyotes**.

I was asked to submit this bill on behalf of a distinguished Maine Coyote scientist, Geri Vistein, who will be testifying later. I ask that any questions of a technical nature about wildlife issues be directed to her. At this time, I will just share some reasons why I agreed to submit this bill.

First, researchers at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick Lab in Orono are seeing an increase in the number of deer tick samples submitted. As of last summer, June 2022, they had received 1,350 deer tick submissions, a significant increase of 50 percent compared to the 900 samples they received a year before. About 60 percent of the ticks submitted to the lab through June 2022 have tested positive for Lyme disease.

Lyme is a serious disease that can become very debilitating. While many people are cured, that requires early identification and often does not work if the individual has a weakened immune system. The proliferation of ticks being carried by deer in Maine presents a real risk, particularly to folks with such a weakened immune system. And, as I noted, from just 2021 to 2022, the number of ticks being carried by deer in Maine has increased by 50%. And the facts are that coyotes kill deer, who are the carriers of ticks.

There is currently research being done that is tracking coyotes on a large scale, and while it is not being done in Maine, it could be instructive. The research is being done on 200 coyotes wearing transmitter collars across three states Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. The goal is to learn more about how the coyotes use their habitat and how land management practices can impact the coyotes' effects on other animals. As many Mainers already know, coyotes frequent areas that are also prime areas for deer. And while there is little to discourage them from doing so, there may be ways to curb fawn killing by coyotes.

It is my understanding that identifying the time period when Maine hunters may kill coyotes would create a period of time during which fawns may mature, followed by their dispersion.

This bill limits the open season for daytime hunting of coyotes to October 1st to March 31st and prohibits daytime hunting of coyotes at all other times during the year. For daytime hunting of coyotes during periods of the year outside of the open season, the bill imposes a \$500 fine and a revocation of a person's hunting license for one year. This bill likewise amends the night hunting season for coyotes, which is currently December 16th to August 31, to December 16 to March 31.

Timing coyote hunting to begin in the fall and last throughout the winter makes sense, as Maine deer tend to give birth in late May or early June, and weaning usually takes place over the first two weeks in September. And the fawns become sexually mature when they are about six months old. This bill is specifically designed to address that timing.

Thank you for listening to this presentation, and I ask that you vote ought to pass on LD 814.