



MAINE FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

*SILENCE IS THE VOICE OF COMPLICITY.
SPEAK UP FOR ANIMALS.*

Testimony of ROBERT FISK, JR.

Founder and President of Maine Friends of Animals

In SUPPORT of LD 814 "An Act to Restrict the Day and Nighttime Killing of Coyotes"

Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

April 3, 2023

Good afternoon Senator LaFountain, Rep. Landry and members of the committee. My name is Robert Fisk, Jr. I am founder and president of Maine Friends of Animals, giving Maine animals a voice for over 25 years; located in Falmouth.

My testimony on the previous bill was focused on the disastrous history in this state in attempting to manage coyote populations. So let's consider another approach if, as we have seen time after time, man cannot regulate coyotes. They are eminently resourceful. They are respected for their intelligence and mischievous nature. Simply killing them, does not solve anything; in fact, as others have noted, it is proven to be counterproductive as birth rates typically increase. Coyotes exist in deserts and in Chicago alleyways. So why not try and understand this animal and learn how we can best co-habitate?

A coyote is 98.6% genetically the same as your pet dog. No one would do to your dog what we do to coyotes without it resulting in aggravated animal cruelty, a felony charge. Are we so removed that we cannot associate the same terror, suffering and pain for both animals?

What makes it so egregious is this has turned into a single-minded and needless killing of a species that offers its human partner much. First, a stable coyote population is critical to a healthy ecosystem. We know they only filled the spot and habitat taken by wolves and big cats before humankind exterminated them. Let coyotes do their job — they help control populations of rodents and rabbits, regulate smaller predators, eat animals who harbor ticks, and cull sick animals. Coyotes are ecologically vital top carnivores in eastern US biodiversity.

Healthy coyote families are typically wary of humans, and attacks are extremely rare. Irresponsible human behavior is most often the root cause of wildlife conflicts. There are many simple ways we can eliminate or reduce coyote

interactions, such as keeping cats indoors, walking dogs with a lease, not leaving out pet food, securing garbage cans, clearing brush, and using motion lighting.

But instead we have this mindless policy that coyotes in Maine can be eliminated any time, anywhere, any season, by any means, no matter how useless and cruel they are.

As we humans continue to expand into wildlife habitat and coyotes adapt to our increasing presence, encounters will naturally occur. It is up to us to reduce, if not eliminate, negative interactions.

We thank and appreciate Rep. Williams for bringing forth this legislation. LD 814 offers a perfect start for the state to take a step back, take a break from the obsession with killing, and reconsider a different approach in our relationship with coyotes. I urge the committee to vote "Ought to pass" on LD 814. I would happy to answer any questions I can for the committee.