

Good afternoon honorable members of the IF&W committee. My name is Paul Laney, I own and operate Grand Lake Lodge and Laney's Guide Service in the small town of Grand Lake Stream in Washington county. I served as a director of the Maine professional guides association for 12 years and I'm also a member of SAM, the Maine sporting dog association, and the Maine trappers association. I was also recently honored to be part of the IF&W 10-year planning committee dealing with bobcat management.

I am here today to urge all of you to adamantly oppose LD814. I view this bill as 100% anti-hunting legislation driven solely on emotion with zero science backing it. At Grand Lake Lodge myself and a few local guides who work for me rely heavily on our fall deer hunt, it generates money which allows us to make a living in the poorest county in Maine. My clients come from all over the United States. Not only do they purchase licenses from IF&W and pay me for the guide service and lodging but they begin spending money as soon as they cross the bridge in Kittery, they make many stops along the way the Grand Lake stream supporting small businesses. These hunters come in hopes of harvesting one of the large Maine whitetails. Over the past five years I've seen a great increase in year-round coyote hunting pressure and with that I've also watched our deer herd steadily grow. This past fall many of the Washington county tagging stations saw harvest numbers they have not seen since the mid-80s, I believe a huge factor in this has been the constant 12-month hunting of coyotes. If a fawn deer is killed by a coyote in June, he will never get the opportunity to reach that mature buck stage that hunters come to Maine in search of. Not only does the removal of coyotes help our deer herd it also helps everything on the landscape. More rabbits, grouse, rodents, ect. Are available which in turn helps the bobcat, lynx and fox populations. I have a great deal of respect for coyotes, they are the apex predator of the Maine woods but I also understand it takes constant hunting pressure to keep the population healthy and viable. I urge all of you to leave any recommendations on changes to our hunting seasons in the hands of our professional biologist and wildlife managers at IF&W and not in the hands of radical anti-hunting groups