



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Plueker and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

I stand in strong support of LD 133, "An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Nuisance Dogs." This bill updates the existing laws by expanding the definition of "nuisance dog" to include dogs or wolf hybrids that disturb the peace of individuals through excessive barking, howling or yelping if the individual making the complaint is not trespassing on the dog owner's property. This change is essential to protect the quality of life for Maine residents while maintaining fair and reasonable expectations for pet owners.

Excessive noise from barking dogs can significantly affect individuals' well-being, affecting sleep, mental health, and overall peace. Persistent noise disturbances can create serious conflicts between animal owners and neighbors. While fences have the ability to keep nuisance dogs out of neighbors' yards, sound travels and can still disrupt the peace of those nearby. By refining the definition of a "nuisance dog," this bill acknowledges the right of individuals to enjoy their homes without continuous disruption from uncontrolled barking while protecting responsible pet owners from unfair claims.

This new language strengthens the definition of nuisance dog or wolf hybrid by explicitly including noise, providing clearer guidelines for enforcement. LD 133 empowers local authorities to take appropriate action when a legitimate nuisance complaint arises within 30 days of the offense. It also encourages responsible pet ownership by reinforcing the need for training, proper confinement and behavioral management of dogs and wolf hybrids.

This bill strikes a balance between the rights of pet owners and the rights of their neighbors. It does not impose undue hardship on dog owners but rather sets reasonable expectations for managing pets in a way that respects the broader community.

I urge the committee to support LD 133 and move it forward for enactment. Thank you for your time and consideration.