

Testimony Neither for Nor Against L.D. 716-An Act to Restrict the Hunting of Coyotes

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Good afternoon. My name is John M. Glowa, Sr. I am president and co-founder of The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc. Our mission is wolf recovery in Maine through research, education and protection. We have been working on this issue for more than thirty years.

The canid situation in Maine and the northeast is extremely complex. We would be happy to give a powerpoint presentation to the committee at your convenience to provide you with much additional information on this issue.

First, there are no “coyotes” in Maine. Maine does have hybrid animals that are coyote/wolf/dog and Maine also has state and federally protected wolves. Maine statutes and rules legalize the killing of “coyotes”, but **because these animals are not coyotes, it is not legal to kill them.** If Maine wants to legalize the killing of these hybrid animals, the state must properly legally identify them in statute or rule.

As noted, Maine does have wolves. The Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recently stated that they expect to document a wolf pack in Maine within ten years. They have also proposed that the wolf be included in the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Our organization documented a live Eastern wolf in Maine through scat collected in 2019. Its scat was one of only seven that were analyzed. We presently have nearly two hundred scats awaiting DNA analysis.

Canada’s Eastern wolves live within seventy-five miles of Maine. They are perhaps the most endangered wolves in North America. They are considered by the federal government to be gray wolves and are therefore protected under the Endangered Species Act. Adult Eastern wolves range from about 45-75 pounds. This size overlaps with the size of large “coyotes” making it impossible to differentiate between the two without a DNA analysis. While the intent of this bill is admirable, if passed as written, it will not legalize the killing of Maine’s “coyotes”. It will only likely mean that a few less “coyotes” and wolves will be are killed by hunters.

We recommend that this bill be amended to legally and accurately define the animal that the state refers to as the “coyote” and that a moratorium be placed on “coyote” hunting and trapping and the “coyote control” program until the status and impact of the current laws and rules on “coyotes” and wolves is determined. We also recommend that IFW’s enabling legislation be amended to require that the department consider science and ethics in its management of Maine’s fish and wildlife.

Here are photos of four Maine canids that may be killed as so-called “coyotes”:

