

April 1st, 2025

Committee of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony In Support of LD 1293- An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

My name is Gina Garey and I am from Portland where I serve as State Director for the Center for a Humane Economy and Animal Wellness Action. I am here to submit testimony in support of LD 1293, An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine.

Today, no doubt, you will be hearing from wildlife officials, advocates, biologists and local advocacy organizations about the egregious practice of incentivized killing games taking place in Maine, targeting the coyote, our state's only remaining predator. Rewarding the indiscriminate killing of as many animals as possible violates conservation ethics and its humane values.

You will learn that ten states have already enacted prohibitions against this blood sport, with five states, including Maine, considering joining the movement to put an end to this unethical aberration of coyote group massacre events for prizes. The US Congress has introduced its own legislation to put an end to this unsportsmanlike activity across the country.

You will hear from experts across the wildlife research community providing long standing evidence that excessively targeting coyote populations does little to protect deer herds, while their presence is a contributing factor towards the prevention of Chronic Wasting Disease in deer populations. CWD is spreading across western and other states rapidly, with strong evidence that the best management tool we have is a robust, self-sustaining predator population to keep CWD in check and maintain healthy herds for the hunting community.

You will hear that mass removal of a wildlife species from the environment impairs the ecological benefits these animals provide to both urban and rural communities. Predator and prey species are vital to a healthy ecosystem. With man's eradication of wolves, coyotes are essential to control rodent and small mammal populations, cull sick and injured animals and wildlife that harbor ticks / Lyme disease.

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We are all here to represent Maine's best wildlife practices and long tradition of ethical hunting, and with no changes to our hunting regulations, this legislation offers an opportunity for you all to say "yes" to prohibiting a practice that is shunned by ethical hunting communities here in Maine and across the country. In voting "ought to pass" you will be representing the very best of this department when you send this legislation to your colleagues for consideration to end incentivized coyote killing games that target Maine's only predator.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1293.

Sincerely,

Gina E. Garey, MS

Maine State Director

The Center for a Humane Economy

Animal Wellness Action

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