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LD 1239 Coyote Killing Contests

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

April 2 @ 1:00

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sue Kistenmacher and I live in Farmingdale.

I am a Maine Master Naturalist, a long-time science teacher, and a current environmental educator and I urge you to support LD 1239 "An Act to Prohibit Coyote Killing Contests in Maine."

When I first heard about this bill, I was shocked. We allow Killing Contests in Maine? It sounds barbaric - Out of the days when we slaughtered buffalo with guns from trains or wiped-out passenger pigeons for sport.

I am surprised and embarrassed that our state, which prides itself on rich hunting ethics and traditions would hold killing contests.

These contests promote cruelty and disrespect for wildlife, deplete lands of wild carnivores, and serve no management or conservation purpose.

A healthy coyote population is an important part of Maine's ecosystem. These keystone predators control rodent and small mammal populations which in turn protect native plants and crops and reduces the transmission of zoonotic diseases such as Lyme. In addition, coyotes consume carrion and remove sick animals from the gene pool.

Further, Coyote Killing Contests are not a tool for coyote management because the indiscriminate killing of coyotes actually increases their population. To quote the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website: "Because pup survival increases as competition decreases, hunting and trapping can enhance pup survival."

This is not anti-hunting legislation. This is about one egregious hunting practice that has no place in Maine.

As part of my environmental education work, I teach 4<sup>th</sup> graders and every March we do a lesson on the coyote. They split into groups and become a coyote family - finding a den, searching for food, developing howls. What would they think of coyote killing contests???

Coyote Killing Contests are cruel, inhumane and violate fundamental hunting ethics.

I urge you to support LD 1239.

Sue Kistenmacher

Farmingdale, ME