

Kristin Peet
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LD 814

Greetings Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Kristin Peet and I am a Wildlife Biologist and Licensed Forester in the state of Maine. I am writing to encourage the Committee to support LD 814 – An Act to Restrict the Daytime and Nighttime Killing of Coyotes. I served recently on the Canid subcommittee for the Furbearer Management Plan for MDIFW. I commend the Department for including a wide variety of people who have opposing views on coyote management. What resulted were many discussions about public opinions and best biological practices for managing coyote populations. Several biologists from MDIFW agreed that positive education regarding the benefits coyotes contribute to a well-functioning ecosystem is needed. For example, benefits like consuming small mammals and keeping deer populations in check, as we are seeing higher numbers of ticks and Lyme disease spreading across the state. To this end we need to stop managing coyotes like they are “vermin” populations with no regard for the optics of year-round daytime and nighttime hunting. This sends the message from the Department that coyotes are expendable and there is no need to attempt to achieve an appropriate carrying capacity for various regions across the state.

I am an avid hunter and like most hunters I know I have a deep respect for the lives of the animals I harvest. I can see the overall purpose and benefit of harvesting animals for consumption or to help achieve management goals. However, there often seems to be a disconnect with coyote hunting, where the lives of those animals are not valued. With fur prices much lower than they used to be, it's not uncommon to find coyote carcasses dumped on the edges of fields or in the woods with their hides intact. Unfortunately this dumping does not trigger the state's “want and waste” law which would prohibit the killing of an animal without the use of some part of it.

I hope that as a country, a state, and a people we have learned much since the 1920's when the rampant killing and extermination of predators was celebrated and rewarded. We now know that a balance of prey and predators is key to achieving a stable ecosystem. I believe that creating an “off” season for coyote hunting will not only achieve that balance, but will also contribute to the optics that coyotes are to be a valued and respected species, along with all others.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts. Sincerely, Kristin Peet