



Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

March 30, 2023

Subject: Testimony in Support of LD 814

Dear Committee Chair and Representatives:

My name is Abby Sadauckas. I am the co-owner of Apple Creek Farm and I'm writing to urge your support of LD 814 An Act to Restrict the Daytime and Nighttime Killing of Coyotes.

When I first began farming in 2009, I thought predators were a barrier to my success. A weasel burrowed into my chicken house and killed my hens, one season a fox killed a hen a day, some nights a great horned owl preyed on broiler chickens. And one day, I saw a lone coyote at the edge of our unfenced pasture.

I met carnivore biologist, Geri Vistein while vending at farmers market in Brunswick. Geri told me about the biology of these predators. The weasel ate my chickens because I had used poison to kill all the rodents. Fox would keep on coming until I built better fences, because it was creating a food cache. Owls hunt on the ground, so by securing my broilers at night, I could avoid predation. The lone coyote was a juvenile, just leaving the pack and I never saw it again.

These conversations with Geri were enlightening and empowering. I learned not to fear these carnivores, but instead, consider how I might farm alongside them and farm *with* nature. Coyotes are crucial to keeping the deer population on our farm under control. Without a stable pack in our ecosystem, we see an imminent threat from deer. As an intermediary host of the meningeal worm, deer, when they graze our pastures create the right environment for our goats and sheep to contract the parasite. Contracting the meningeal worm leads to an intensive, life-saving chemical treatment at best and at worst, life altering mobility issues often resulting in culling the impacted animal.

In closing, as a participant in the *Farming with Carnivores Network*, I urge you to support this bill. Coyotes are a keystone species in Maine's ecosystems and this bill will enable coyotes to develop stable packs which provide benefits to farmers by controlling the deer population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abby", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Abby Sadauckas