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LD 716

Hello,

My testimony is in regard to LD716, a bill to reduce the hunting season of the Eastern Coyote in Maine and to end the night hunting of coyotes.

I am absolutely against this bill and do not support reducing the season nor the end of a night hunting season. I believe the current season should remain as it has been, including the option to hunt at night.

What is the basis or justification for changing the season? The Eastern Coyote is not only abundant and successful in Maine but the population is in no danger of collapse or decline due to hunting.

The Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website says that "Despite continued human encroachment and mixed public attitudes towards coyotes, the species has maintained its numbers. Biologists estimate that at least 12,000 coyotes are living in Maine." So if the coyote population size isn't the reason for this bill then what else is it? Has new scientific evidence or recent studies indicated problems with coyotes in Maine? I am not aware of any such studies. Are there confirmed reports of conflicts or complaints from home owners or other Maine citizens regarding hunters causing problems? I have not heard of any such complaints in local media sources.

The Eastern Coyote is an incredibly intelligent animal and is difficult to hunt day or night. Even with the current minimal hunting pressure statewide the population will continue to grow. A restricted season that doesn't include night hunting will cause an increase in human/coyote conflicts which other states have already experienced and are well documented. Additionally, hunting contributes to conservation efforts through licensing fees that can fund wildlife management programs. Also, coyotes are highly adaptable and have been documented to prey on pets, scavenge in residential areas, and, in rare cases, attack humans. Hunting helps mitigate some of these risks by managing coyote numbers, discouraging aggressive behavior, and maintaining a natural fear of humans.

Lastly, coyotes have few natural predators, allowing their populations to grow unchecked in many regions of our state. There is no justification for reducing the season or eliminating the option to night hunt.

Respectfully,  
Jeff DesLauriers