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**Testimony in Support of LD 716 (IF&W)
An Act to Restrict the Hunting of Coyotes
Ed Friedman, Chair, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) via E-Filing 3/2/25**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts & members of the IF&W Committee,

Perhaps no other wild animal has endured the wrath of humans while evoking such genuine heartfelt admiration than the coyote. Some livestock owners curse her existence, many Native Americans consider her the smartest animal on Earth, and others experience joy in seeing or hearing this vocal Song Dog.

Maine has a natural predator problem; we don't have enough of them! In the absence of a successful reintroduction program for cougar and wolves **which we should have**, our last and best hope is coyote. Problems from the loss of these three apex predators are well known and include overgrazing and agricultural damage by herbivores, proliferation of disease-carrying and crop eating rodents, the spread of herbivore-resistant invasive plant species as native plants are browsed and the massive spread of ticks and tick-borne diseases. [Benefits](#) are lesser known.

Historically and presently Maine has and does treat predators like vermin, with little understanding of the benefits they bring. LD 716 gives coyote a little bit more of a chance. By limiting hunting during and after the period pups are "fledged," and at night, coyote young are given a chance to learn the skills necessary to survive in the wild, becoming proficient hunter/gatherers. This and preservation of their family units (both parents still alive) at a formative time, goes a long way to minimizing problematic interactions with humans and domestic livestock because coyotes get a fair chance to do what they are supposed to do—hunt and gather wild foods while maintaining their necessary complex social units. The alternative, killing of coyote parents, creates community and family chaos and this, when their family structure has been destroyed, is when coyotes are most driven on a destructive path towards human society and easier pickings. This is often destructive to both parties. The loss of apex predators particularly exacerbates deer/human problems. The presence of predators keeps deer alert and moving and less likely to do the often severe crop damage they are capable of. Deer on the move also minimizes some of the other various problems mentioned in paragraph two.

Coyote provides myriad benefits to our communities, both urban and rural. She offers free rodent control (preying on mice, rats and gophers), works sanitation (cleaning up dead animal carcasses and reducing the spread of rodent-borne diseases), and protects gardens and crops by controlling populations of rabbits, raccoons, and other animals. Nowadays we call these "[ecosystem services](#)", benefits to us that typically are often unrecognized, undervalued and missing from the balance sheet when we make decisions regarding our environment.

Despite all her charms, the coyote is much maligned. Stereotypes and fallacies follow her wherever she goes. Her ability to adjust to changing conditions and diverse environments makes it difficult to pigeonhole her, perhaps further contributing to people's fear and misunderstanding. She is the flagship species for all misunderstood and exploited carnivores. Poisoned, trapped, gunned down from the air and [shot for prizes](#), an estimated half a million coyotes are killed every year in the United States—roughly one per minute. Yet coyote is a vital part of America's fabric, both historically in the lessons she's taught us and in the valuable role she plays in our urban and rural communities. She's a delight to those who truly understand her.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 716 and give this wonderful and helpful partner of ours a better chance.

Thank you.



Photo: Ed Friedman

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay utilizes research, education, advocacy, and land conservation to preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of Merrymeeting Bay and Gulf of Maine.

Ed Friedman
Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
LD 716

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay testimony attached in support of LD 716