

April 2, 2025

Testimony of Lily Piel

In SUPPORT of LD 1293 “An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine”

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee:

My name is Lily Piel. I live in Belfast, ME. I support LD 1293.

While not a native Mainer, (I grew up in central Vermont), I’ve lived in this beautiful state for the past 25 years. I went to college at Bates, and I have strong ties to Maine. My great-grandfather Michael Gottfried Piel owned a farm in Jackman and was an avid hunter and fly fisherman, a passion shared by my grandfather Henry Piel of Guilford. My uncle Michael Piel, a WWII veteran, had a farm in Abbot and raised sheep – he developed the Katahdin breed of sheep which now has the most registrations of any sheep breed in the United States. My uncle Mike and my father Elmar Piel were both dedicated outdoorsmen and hunters. I understand and value the hunting of deer and other game animals as an important tradition and way of life in Maine.

I support LD 1293 for the following reasons:

There is no scientific evidence supporting indiscriminate wildlife killing as effective management. Studies show short-term hunts fail to control coyote populations or boost deer numbers, as coyotes quickly rebound through increased reproduction and immigration. Habitat loss and severe winters are more likely causes of deer declines than coyote predation. Moreover, these contests, often mislabeled as “wildlife management,” lack official support from the Department of IF&W.

Mass removal of wildlife disrupts ecological benefits vital to urban and rural communities. Predator-prey dynamics are essential for ecosystem health, with coyotes controlling rodents, culling sick animals, and reducing tick-borne diseases. As top carnivores, they stabilize biodiversity in the Eastern US.

These killing events degrade Maine’s wildlife and disrespect its hunting traditions. They contradict principles of sportsmanship and fair chase, undermining public perception of hunting. Rewarding indiscriminate killing violates conservation ethics and humane values, and glorifying killing for its own sake is not a lesson we should teach children.

Opposition to wildlife killing contests is growing rapidly, with most of the public opposing them. The bill is backed by numerous state and national conservation groups. Ten states have banned these contests, and four more are considering similar legislation. As Congress introduces the 'Prohibit Wildlife Killing Contests Act', Maine should join the national trend to end these brutal practices.

Please support LD 1293.

Thank you,

Lily Piel
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