

My name is Ethan Dreissigacker. I am 33 years old. I grew up in Morrisville VT, left VT for a few years of college in NH, and have lived in Craftsbury & Albany VT for the last 10 years. I grew up in a non-hunting family, but was always fascinated with wildlife and nature. I was introduced to hunting and fishing by some friends and mentors in college and quickly recognized it as an incredibly meaningful and intimate way I could interact with, and be a part of the natural community in which we all live. I am an avid outdoorsman, spending time outside in Vermont everyday hunting, fishing, birding, running, hiking, biking, and/or skiing, and hunting is the primary source of meat for my household.

I am opposed to bill S258 because I think it is bad for wildlife. I feel this bill will undermine a successful system of wildlife management and weaken our ability to conserve healthy populations of wildlife in the future. This bill is a solution without a problem. It will take resources away from addressing existing problems, and create new problems.

Proponents of this bill will tell you that it's about equity. If this bill was about equity, it might add a couple more seats to the existing board with more diverse perspectives and stop there. Instead, it goes on to remove regulating power from the board and effectively hand that power over to a single, governor-appointed person—the commissioner of F&W—An individual who also happens to be in a position of power over the F&W biologists who we rely on for the science behind our management. This is not about equity, it's about setting the stage for inequity.

I feel strongly that any bill pertaining to the management of wildlife should address a clear problem that exists *for wildlife*. What problem does this bill solve for wildlife? Climate change and development are having profound impacts on wildlife habitat and biodiversity. According to the VT ANR, VT is losing 1500 acres per year of “significant wildlife habitat”. *This bill does nothing to help with these issues*. Meanwhile, despite these challenges, we have thriving (and growing) wildlife populations, (both game and non-game), amazingly low levels of human-wildlife conflict, and robust opportunities for Vermonters to interact closely with wildlife through hunting, fishing, trapping, and viewing. This is a testament to the effective and successful system we currently have in place.

S258 requires creation of a Non-Game Plan. We already have one— It's called The Vermont Wildlife Action Plan, and it's one of the best in the country. Creating a new plan will be redundant and take human and financial resources away from implementing the work VT F&W is already doing. If this bill added a new funding source for Non-Game work, that would be great—a win for all wildlife and vermonters—but *this bill doesn't do that!*

This bill also bans coyote hunting with dogs altogether. This is something that a large amount of time and energy was put into regulating last year, and we really have yet to see how the regulations put in place this season have worked. As someone that has two hunting dogs and hunts with them daily when seasons are open, I feel strongly that the use of dogs in hunting, like hunting in general, should be regulated—but not banned. These are the tools in the tool kit that have made the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation so successful over the last 200 years. The future is going to be hard. Facing climate change and a more crowded landscape,

change in how we manage wildlife and live our lives is inevitable. The last thing we should do is remove the only proven tools we have from our toolkit as we face these new challenges.

If passed, S258 will make wildlife management in Vermont *less equitable* and compromise a very successful system of management along the way. I feel that the consideration of this bill and others like it alienate hunters & anglers and further divide stakeholders in a time when everyone that cares about wildlife and conservation really needs to be coming together to face the significant and unprecedented challenges the future holds.