

Dear Finance and Appropriations Committee Senators,

Please vote to approve S.258 in your committees. It is time for the Fish & Wildlife Board (Board) to be more representative of all Vermonters, and to end baiting and hunting of coyotes with hounds to protect property rights and for ethical reasons of fair chase.

The Fish & Wildlife Department has stated that the Department will be financially impacted from this bill through the loss of license fee revenue and the need for more staff time because the Board will now be advisory. I believe these concerns are not valid.

The loss of revenue from licenses is minimal. This year, the Department sold 34 coyote hounding licenses at \$50 each or \$1,700. This represents 0.0006% of the Department's \$29+ million FY 23 budget.

The need for additional Department staff time is not justifiable. The Department claims more time will be needed to work with an advisory board vs. one with regulatory authority and so more staff need to be hired. This overlooks the fact that the Department staff already provide significant support to the existing Board, as evidenced through the LCAR process. It also assumes that the Department will have to expend a significant amount of time responding to the Board to justify its positions, i.e., presuming an adversarial relationship.

Thank you for considering this. Please vote to approve S.258.

Sincerely,
Barbara Felitti
Huntington, VT