



Dear Chairman Deen and Committee Members;

Happy President's Day. Thank you for the chance to speak with all of you on Friday about H 60. As I mentioned to Representative Lefebvre at lunch, it was my first involvement with state level government apart from voting and I enjoyed it immensely. The friendly hospitality of the Committee was a large part of that.

Strenuously wanting to avoid wading into the weeds, there were three related points subsequent to my testimony that I wish to comment on with your indulgence:

1. With the advantage of speaking after me, Mr. Covey made an ad-lib critique of my point that coyotes are generally left to rot by pointing out that the barely attended Fall Fur Auction is not the only venue for fur. No numbers for the other venues were even approximated. Even if they were, they would have to exceed the VTA Fall Fur Auction's 34 by an order of magnitude to undercut the evidence of profligate waste and disrespect provided by coyote hunters' own social media posts, the few pelts at the auction, and the incentive to leave a coyote to rot implicit in the mere \$15 (max) price for a coyote pelt.
2. Commissioner Porter expressed reservations regarding attempts to regulate ethics such as the waste and lack of respect for coyotes shown by some coyote hunters and to the resources required to conduct a coyote study.
 - a. *Ethics*: To stop sending the inferable message that coyotes are vermin by treating coyotes like other game animals is not legislating ethics in the sense of Prohibition. It is leading by example in a similar way to how the State does not allow an unlimited take "open season" on bears, moose, deer, or on drinking alcohol. As an example in print of how state regulations affect perception, a Newsmax article on open seasons states, "**... more often than not, animals with such seasons are considered pests.**" <http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/hunting-connecticut-animals/2015/05/16/id/645052/> You would not get that impression from the FWD's webpage on coyotes, but unfortunately, it is all too easy for some to take that message from the anachronistic no limit, no reporting, open-season.
 - b. *Resources*: H 60 calls for a population estimate and an explanation of how it is reached but does not appear to necessarily stipulate a new population study to reach it. Chris Bernier's explanation Friday, of the estimated population and how it was made was very clear and (to me) biologically and practically reasonable and could render concerns about a lot of additional time and money moot. In any case the concern seems inconsistent since the FWD has very recently expended a considerable amount of time exhaustively researching the pros and cons of a petition to extend the bobcat and otter trapping seasons (*ironically made by Mr. Covey, who on Friday turned 180 degrees and stated that any attempt to change or review hunting seasons casts doubt on FWD biologists' expertise*). It seems that all of us should have the same consideration given to our wildlife concerns as organized hunters and trappers receive for theirs.

3. Finally, regarding the Department's biologists, for what my opinion is worth, I found Chris Bernier's comments to be clear, open-minded, informative, and grounded in obvious expertise. I think Chris went a long way to providing a well-grounded population estimate and the solid base to move ahead with H 60.

Again, thank you all very much and I hope you are all having a great weekend,

Rob Mullen