

Hello. I was in attendance tonight for the hearing on Coyotes. First I want to thank the committee for taking on this topic and allowing the public to be heard. I also want to thank you for your flexibility in letting residents call in. That was very thoughtful and unexpected. It shows you really do want to hear from as many constituents as possible. I want to make 2 observations from this evening now that I have had time absorb and process everything that was said during the public testimonies.

First, it struck me that so many people who have devoted their lives, made it their careers, and have deepened their respective educations on ecology, science, biology, advocacy and animal behaviors were all there tonight with a common message. All of them made articulate and impassioned cases for a misunderstood species and a strong case for not having a coyote open-season or killing contests, as shockingly is the case in Vermont today. The 2 gentleman that spoke in favor coyote hunting were equally passionate but really didn't make any empirical argument. Both of the men only spoke from an emotional perspective and used anecdotal information that ran counter to some of the more empirical evidence cited by the other speakers. It seems the debate is between highly informed professionals vs. hobbyists and sport enthusiasts.

Second, it also struck me that no one from the fish and wildlife committee or board was there tonight. Not one, as far as I could tell. Porter, at least should have been there. I think it clearly shows how the Fish and Wildlife Department doesn't care to hear the public's opinion. They act as lobbyists for the hunting and trapping community. There is a serious problem and conflict of interest going on there. Which of course is why we felt the need to reach out to the legislatures directly.

Again, thank you so much for the time tonight and hearing the facts. In closing I just want to reiterate the I implore you to please follow through on the proposal to legislate a regulated a coyote hunting season and to ban coyote killing contests.

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