



## GREEN MOUNTAIN ANIMAL DEFENDERS

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January 23, 2018

Re: Coyote Hunting and Wildlife-Killing Contests

To: House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife:

I am writing to you on behalf of Green Mountain Animal Defenders, Vermont's oldest and largest, volunteer-run, animal-protection organization with thousands of dedicated supporters throughout the state.

**Note:** Please see the attached results of the [petition](#) we started for those who wish to voice their strong opposition to the coyote-killing contests that are currently allowed in our state. More than 1,600 Vermonters have already signed in support of ending these unregulated contests, with more being added each day.

In its 2017 coyote position statement, [Coyote Control and Hunting Contests](#), the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department acknowledges that "In recent years, competitive coyote hunting contests have been held by hunters. The Department does not sponsor, promote, or encourage coyote hunting tournaments." Further, the document states, "Coyote hunting contests are not only ineffective at controlling coyote populations, but these kinds of competitive coyote hunts are raising concerns on the part of the public and could possibly jeopardize the future of hunting and affect access to private lands for all hunters."

I would also like to bring to your attention the fact that these so-called contests are not based on sound wildlife management or conservation practices. They have no measurable impact on regulating coyote populations, nor do they bolster the population of deer or other game animals.





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Coyotes serve a very crucial role in the ecosystem of our state. They greatly help to control the rodent population and, in turn, limit disease transmission as well as crop destruction by rodents. It is significant that Lyme disease is spread by ticks, and rodents are a tick's favorite host.

The importance of these facts cannot be overemphasized due to the health risk to Vermont residents. In fact, Vermont had the second highest incidence of Lyme disease in the entire country last year. The Vermont Department of Health reports that annual cases of Lyme disease continue to rise in Vermont. For every coyote slain in a killing contest, fewer tick-carrying rodents are eaten.

For the reasons above and many more, prohibiting wildlife-killing contests is an essential step and would benefit the vast majority of Vermonters, from those who hunt game animals to those who find these events offensive at best.

On behalf of my organization, the signers of our petition, and many other Vermonters, I request that you do all you have been empowered to do to end the open season on coyotes and all killing contests. Establishing a regulated coyote season and prohibiting wildlife-killing contests, which are excessive and serve no positive purpose, would benefit the state, its citizens, and our wildlife.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon MacNair*

Sharon MacNair, president Green Mountain Animal Defenders

