

Dear Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Gaelan Chutter-Ames and I am writing in opposition to H. 172. I believe in managing our natural resources based on the best science available to ensure the health of our ecosystems and the flora and fauna which we all enjoy engaging with in a variety of pursuits. My pursuits include hiking, cycling, paddling and lastly, though certainly not least, angling and hunting. H. 172 removes a critical tool for managing wildlife populations as well as deeply rooted traditions which, contrary to conventional misconception continue, as they have, to develop the most ethical and humane methods of take technology and science can provide.

Hound hunting for bears is a prime example of a hunting practice that provides one of the most effective tools for scientifically based bear management. Hunters with hounds have the ability, with a treed bear, to ascertain sex, health, and maturity – permitting them the best possible situation to harvest whichever sex/age/health status the scientists at the Department of Fish and Wildlife indicate would best support population health.

As this bill also affects trapping, I request that you refer the letter submitted (or soon to be submitted) to this body from Back Country Hunters and Anglers, of which I am a member, on behalf of their members which provides a strong evidence-based argument for trapping as a tool for management and the challenges the language in H. 172 creates.

I, however, am not I humbly request that the committee actively seek testimony from scientists at Vermont's Department of Natural Resources as well as other specialist wildlife biologists relevant to this proposed legislation (bear, furbearers/small mammals) from around the country. Before any decision is made, it is critical that we hear from the scientists doing the science we all reference. This will allow the committee and the public at large to hear the most informed dialogue that we can provide.

As a hunter and angler, even one who does not hunt with hounds nor traps, I firmly support methods of take which enhance the health of Vermont's flora and fauna, the ethics of which are backed by science and governed accordingly. Generalized characterizations of trappers, houndspeople, hunters, anglers or those that administer relevant departments or agencies as cruel, bloodthirsty, or out to kill for the sake of killing is an ad hominem fallacy which detracts from the civil discourse we might otherwise have, centered on the science-based management of Vermont's natural resources and I urge you to be mindful of this as testimony unfolds. Those characterizations are categorically false and I trust that you will recognize this and seek the civil discourse for which Vermont is known and that we treasure.

Scientific Management

Bear

Trapping