

05-05-2021

Testimony on H.411 Draft 2.1 Dated 05-03-2021

An act relating to the retrieval and disposal of wild animals.

Chair Sheldon and Committee Members,

I am writing in reference to this most recent version of the “wanton waste” bill. As stated in previous testimony, it is our position that wanton waste of wildlife is not an widespread issue in Vermont. That said, we believe that true waste of our resources is unconscionable but must be addressed thoughtfully. We came to the table in good faith to work with legislators and other stakeholders and craft language designed to address truly wanton waste of wildlife, while avoiding unintended consequences; and we endorsed the language developed in that process.

We appreciate the good work this committee has done to create the current version of the bill and bring it more closely in line with the reported recommendations of the working group. Version 2.1 is a vast improvement over the original bill as drafted, and while we feel that the exemption for coyotes and crows did no harm, and provided explicit clarity, we are satisfied that H.411 Version 2.1 does not create unnecessary legal hurdles. It does provide an additional tool for our warden force to prosecute egregious offenders, while minimizing the likelihood of frivolous claims.

We noted the suggestion for an amendment to the disposal section in Commissioner Porter’s testimony today, and while at first hesitant, we sought further clarity and are comfortable with adding the Commissioner’s language to amend 4295, sub 2 (Page 3, Line8), should the committee decide to follow his recommendation.

My Best Regards,

Mike Covey

Executive Director

Vermont Traditions Coalition

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