

Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Testimony on H.411
April 19, 2022 – Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee
Chris Bradley, Executive Director & President

My name is Chris Bradley, and I am the President & Executive Director of the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. I am also a registered lobbyist for the Federation, with the Federation being an umbrella organization representing over 53 member clubs across Vermont with over 14,000 dues paying members.

I wish to thank Chair Bray for the invitation to speak very briefly today on H.411, I thank each of you Senators for this time; I promise to be brief.

While few bills are "perfect", the House Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife Committee produced a bill that provides wanton waste protection for a wide variety of the Game species of Vermont, including all big game, and this is a huge step forward in the management of our wildlife.

If there was a turning point in this bill, we believe it came with the removal of coyote from the consideration of wanton waste, something we suggested and which we support.

While some will argue that we humans should leave coyotes completely alone because we are told that coyote population would self-regulate: Allowing coyote to achieve that population level would have serious consequences such as decimating smaller games species; increase issues with disease; it would drive out species like fox who coyote share habitat with; we will find coyote pushing further and further into urban environments; and with that push will come a significantly higher level of negative human-coyote interactions than could be tolerated by most citizens.

While removing coyote from this bill is most assuredly not supported by all stakeholders: All stakeholders can hopefully agree that we have gained a critically important protection for a wide range of other species, and in regard to coyote we also know there will be new rules and regulations forthcoming that will specifically concern coyote hunting through bills like S.281.

If we were to suggest a change, it would be for this committee to consider removing crow from the definition of "Covered wild animal". However, given the scope of protection provided to other species, we support this bill.

To close: The VTFSC supports H.411 as written, we would like to specifically recognize the House Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife Committee for their dedication in getting this bill passed, and we hope that this Committee will also support it as written.

Thank You