

Dear Representatives Stevens and Wood,

I am CC'ing Committee Assistant William Marlier of the House Committee on Environment and Energy, in the hope that this email may be part of the testimony/record for the Committee....

I am strongly opposed to S.258 and I hope that you make the time to dig deeply enough into the bill itself and the background story to see the many flaws in this bill and process. With all of the critical issues our state is facing, including rising property taxes, crime, wide-spread drug use, flood recovery, etc.... I cannot even believe that this bill gathered so much effort and time from elected officials.

The Legislature wisely (essentially) removed itself from Fish and Wildlife matters many years ago. They recognized and acknowledged that they were not the experts nor could they be, and that both the People, and the Legislature, needed to put their trust in our very capable Fish and Wildlife Department. The Department is fully staffed with high-performing biologists, scientists, environmental engineers, etc.. to get the job done. The Department has worked hand-in-hand with the current Fish and Wildlife Board configuration (14 members) for over 25 years now with virtually no complaints from either group. The Department is not asking for or supporting these proposed changes in S.258. In fact, they have testified against it. The Board is not asking for or supporting these changes. So why is the Legislature letting a small, out-of-state funded special interest group like POW call the shots? I listened to much of the "1st round" of testimony on this Bill in the Senate and it was shocking to hear how unfamiliar the Committee was with how the Department and the Board function as a team. These are not opinions, these are procedural facts that the majority of the Committee completely had wrong, primarily because of the lies and misinformation being spread by POW. The Bill has changed a lot since then, but it is still greatly flawed and totally unnecessary.

Why is legal means of taking coyotes mixed into this bill, and why is the Legislature making determinations on legal methods of take? This is Fish and Wildlife business. If someone with money decides that bait fishing with a worm is cruel or unethical, can they lobby the Legislature to prevent me from taking my grandson fishing? If you can't put a hound on a coyote what's next, will Montpelier legalize me using my lab to retrieve ducks or grouse? No offense to either of you, but many in Montpelier and Chittenden County have lost touch with rural and traditional lifestyles. If a farmer has a stillborn calf and he shoots a coyote feeding on the dead carcass will he be arrested for baiting? These animal rights extremists will stop at nothing and it's sad to see that Vermont politics has reached this place where out-of-state money is what gets things done. I'm naive enough to have been shocked that the Senate vote went 100% along party lines. Is there no more independent thinking in Montpelier and is everything controlled by the Party powers that be? Sad to see.

Vermont has an effective and functional system for regulating Fish and Wildlife. It is a model used all over the country. I urge you and your colleagues to leave it alone. What would Government look like if every time somebody with power disagreed with a decision made by one of our many State Boards, they could simply disband the Board and manipulate the newly appointed members such that they agreed with their own views?

Those of us that were raised here are generally a pretty quiet bunch. We mind our own business and were taught "to each his own" but sadly we don't get the same respect in return anymore. Shut down the out-of-state special interests and focus on real problems Vermonters face every day.

Thanks for your consideration,

Bruce Therrien
Waterbury Center, VT