

House Committee on Environment and Energy Members,

Please oppose bill S.258. I had the honor and privilege of serving on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board from 2012 to 2018, representing Essex County. I served with outstanding people who considered the scientific input from department biologists along with public input, and made thoughtful decisions on fish and wildlife management. I followed the board's work for many years before my appointment and have closely followed the board's work during the six years since my service, and in my opinion, the board has done an outstanding job using the best scientific information available, while also giving thoughtful consideration to public input. I am not aware of a single case where the board disregarded the scientific input from department biologists or the department's position. The board and department have always had a symbiotic relationship with mutual respect for each other. The department doesn't support this bill and has testified against it, wanting to continue its effective working relationship with the board.

Vermonters enjoy healthy fish and wildlife populations, largely due to the great work of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and its working partner, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board. We are fortunate to have a team of outstanding fish and wildlife professionals in the department.

This bill would eliminate two effective tools for managing coyote populations, hunting with dogs and hunting over bait. Without these tools, coyotes would have a detrimental impact on Vermont's deer herd, and rabies and mange would be more prevalent in the coyote population.

We need to continue having science based fish and wildlife management instead of emotion based management, so we can continue to enjoy healthy fish and wildlife populations.

Sincerely,

Craig Nolan

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