

Dear Senator Starr and House Committee Members,

What makes an excellent administrator, in my opinion, is one who utilizes the advice and input from experts. Most of us are knowledgeable on any number of subjects, but expertise takes specialized education and broad experience.

What I understand about the controversy surrounding S.258 is that a small number of vocal activists have initiated a move to undermine Vermont's experts who have a proven track record of guiding, protecting and managing the State's Fish and Wildlife as well as the State's administration of its Fish and Wildlife Department. Beyond politics, this is a discipline based on biology and broad animal sciences. While I understand there may be a few issues of legitimate concern, this is not unusual nor particular to this single department. In no other case do we toss out an entire department's governing board, not in instances where complaints may be legitimate and certainly not because of partisan pressure. The health and welfare of our fish and wildlife depend on the expertise of these specialists.

Neither has the board asked for the changes proposed in S.258 nor do they in their professional opinions believe these changes are appropriate nor desirable. Instead, they state they are specifically NOT desirable.

To our legislators who would reconstitute the Fish and Wildlife board and choose to serve on it: stay in your lane. Its not your area of expertise nor are you qualified by your having been elected to office to serve in a scientific specialty position. The board is already diverse in makeup. Its expert in practicing holistic wildlife management. The concerns raised over coyote hunting dogs and pets have been blown out of proportion. Fears are powerful but let's be real. Very very few incidents have occurred where there have been real injuries to pets from hunting dogs. The last thing we should want is human or pet injuries from coyotes resulting from improperly managed wildlife or decisions based on fear or politics and not legitimate science.

Again, the VT Fish and Wildlife's track record is excellent and does not warrant the proposed changes in S.258.

Please vote NO to S.258.

Thank you,

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