

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 1148

**AN ACT TO EXPAND THE SEASON FOR NIGHT HUNTING OF
COYOTES**

SPONSORED BY: Representative BLACK of Wilton

CO-SPONSORED BY: Senator SHERMAN of Aroostook

Representative CRAY of Palmyra

Representative DAVIS of Sangerville

Representative JACKSON of Oxford

Representative LONG of Sherman

Representative NADEAU of Fort Kent

Representative Noon of Sanford

Representative WOOD of Sabattus

Senator BURNS of Washington

DATE OF HEARING: April 23, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Joel Wilkinson, Colonel of the Maine Warden Service at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking in opposition to **L.D.1148**.

L.D. 1148 would establish a night hunting season for coyotes from September 1st to December 15th. Hunting coyotes at night during this season must be at fixed bait locations and under the supervision of a game warden. It allows a client of a licensed guide who holds a permit to participate in night hunting of coyotes during this season without obtaining a permit.

Title 12 Section 12001 already allows for the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to appoint and authorize agents to hunt coyotes at night during any open season on deer, directs the commissioner to develop policies to make the affected public and affected law enforcement officers aware of any night hunting operations.

Permits are issued on a case by case basis and are closely vetted by the bureau of warden service, the bureau of wildlife and the commissioner's office. Additional permit restrictions can be added to the permit as deemed necessary by the commissioner.

As written, L.D. 1148 would allow a client of a guide to hunt coyotes at night during the open season on deer without a permit and without going thru the vetting process currently required to obtain the permit, as long as the guide is in possession of a permit to hunt coyotes during the open season on deer. Permits need to be limited to problem areas determined by the bureau of wildlife and closely monitored by department staff. Current law allows the night hunting of coyotes during this season, but only after a vetting process has occurred to ensure hunters are compliant and appropriate notifications are made to law enforcement.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.