

## An Act to Reform the Fish and Wildlife Board (S.258)

Senate Bill 258 seeks to transfer the rulemaking authority for the taking of fish, wildlife, and fur-bearing animals from the all-volunteer, uncredentialed Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board (“Board”) to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The bill also proposes new standards for appointing Board members and additional educational requirements for the Board. In addition, the bill also would prohibit the hunting of coyotes with dogs and the baiting of coyotes.

### Why Board Reform is Needed

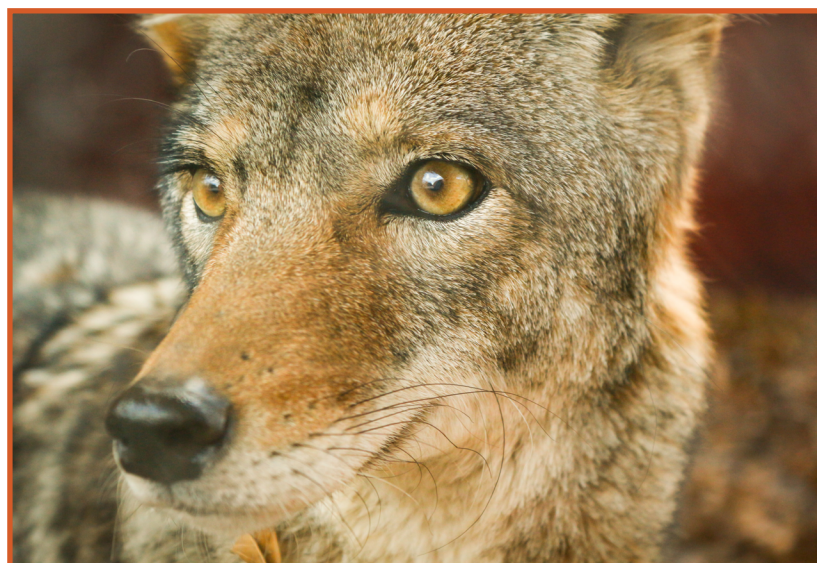
The Board makes public policy on a shared public asset — wildlife — without representation from a broad public. The Board is currently a regulatory body rather than an advisory body, which puts it out of line with over 300 Boards throughout the state that are advisory-only.

### Representation Matters

The Board is currently composed of 14 members, one from each county, who are appointed by the governor through an opaque appointment process. The Board does not represent the broad and varied interests and values of Vermonters who want a say in how wildlife is managed. S.258 will add 2 additional seats to the Board that will be appointed by the Legislature, making the total number of seats on the Board 16. For the first time, there will be specific standards that new Board members must adhere to, such as a knowledge of the ethics of fish and wildlife management and a recognition of the challenges to wildlife caused by climate change.

### The Need for Education

Currently, there is no education required for the Board members on topics like coexistence with wildlife, the impacts of climate change on wildlife, the reduction of conflict between humans and wildlife, and other critically important aspects of



wildlife conservation. S.258 would require that each Board member receive training that specifically addresses each of these areas.

### Coyote Hounding

Coyote hounding is a cruel and outdated practice where packs of powerful hounds chase coyotes for miles across large tracts of land while the hunters track their movement, oftentimes miles away, in their vehicles. There are reports every year from Vermont landowners who have had their private property rights violated by these far-ranging hounds. S.258 would end coyote hounding in Vermont and stop the currently allowed practice of baiting coyotes.

*Your voice matters. Please contact your state Representatives and Senators today and ask them to support S.258. If you need help figuring out who your legislators are, or have any other questions, please message VT State Director Bob Galvin at [bgalvin@animalwellnessaction.org](mailto:bgalvin@animalwellnessaction.org).*