



February 6, 2023

Memorandum of Support S.4099/A.2917

S.4099 (Kennedy)/A.2917 (Glick): An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to making contests, competitions, tournaments and derbys to take wildlife unlawful.

This bill amends the Environmental Conservation Law to make it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, promote or participate in any contest, competition, tournament or derby with the objective of taking or hunting wildlife for prizes or other inducement, or for entertainment. Contests for taking or hunting white-tailed deer, turkey or bear are exempted, which are already regulated by season limits, as are special dog training areas or field trials or similar canine performance events. Violations are punishable by fines of \$500 to \$2,000. In addition, the remains of any wildlife killed in violation of the bill's provisions are forfeited to the Department of Environmental Conservation.

According to the New York State Humane Association, there are currently at least 29 annual wildlife killing contests in New York State, of which 17 are coyote killing contests and the remainder are contests to kill foxes, squirrels, woodchucks, raccoons, and crows. Wildlife killing contests are contrary to sound principles of wildlife management and to fundamental principles of hunting ethics because they promote killing the largest number of target animals in the shortest time. To do this, participants often use unethical means such as fake distress calls, lures, and baits. In addition, the carcasses of the killed animals are often treated as trash and disposed of in dumpsters.

Coyote killing contests are particularly destructive because of the similarities between large Eastern coyotes and wolves, both of which are present in New York State. Wolves are listed as an endangered species under both federal and New York State law and the killing of wolves is prohibited under both federal and State law. There have been several documented instances in New York of hunters killing what they thought was a large coyote, but which DNA analysis proved to be a gray wolf. The most recent incident involved a large canid that was shot near Cooperstown in December 2021. The hunter believed it was a large coyote, but subsequent DNA analysis proved it to be 98% gray wolf. The Department of Environmental Conservation website states that “[a]ny canid 50 pounds or greater may be a wolf” and that “wolves are present in Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario and it is possible for these animals to travel into New York.” Coyote killing contests award prizes for the largest “coyote” killed, thereby increasing the chances that endangered wolves may be killed.

For all of these reasons, Protect the Adirondacks supports S.4099/A.2917.

For more information:

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