

Oppose S.258

An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife



We believe that S.258 is an agenda-driven response to the recent dispute over rulemaking decisions about trapping best management practices and hunting coyotes with dogs. Rather than working within the robust public input process that VTF&W currently uses, this legislation needlessly restructures the Fish and Wildlife Board and transfers authority to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, costing the Department time and money.

Functionally, the bill proposes to transfer the authority to adopt rules for the taking of fish, wildlife, and fur-bearing animals from the Fish and Wildlife Board to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The bill would also amend the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Board so that it serves in an advisory capacity to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. In addition, the bill would prohibit the hunting of coyote with dogs.

Fast Facts

Fish & Wildlife Department is against this bill and has asked Senate Natural Resources Committee to work with the Department and stakeholders to find a better way.

The existing Fish & Wildlife Board has a very narrow focus related to fishing, hunting, and trapping regulations. S.258 would broadly expand the scope of the board, which will be burdensome for the Department.

The decisions of the existing Fish & Wildlife board are based on the recommendations and research provided by the professional scientists of the Department.

A nongame management plan already exists and it is one of the most comprehensive in the nation and incorporates public input, yet the bill calls for an additional plan.

What are the potential impacts of S.258?

Aggregates rule making authority under one person, with only minor checks and balances.

Adds vague Board influence on policy related to all aspects of the Department which would include Act 250, habitat management, law enforcement, outreach and education, fish stocking, and more.

Time and financial strain on an already tight Fish & Wildlife budget. The Department estimates this bill would require two additional staff and an attorney.

S.258 is a solution looking for a problem. Vote no on this bill!

For more information, please contact the Vermont Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. vermont@backcountryhunters.org
