



BAN ON COYOTE KILLING CONTESTS *Banning Competitive Coyote Killing in New Mexico* SB253

Sponsors: Senator Mark Moores &
Representative Jeff Steinborn

THE PROBLEM:

🐾 New Mexico has seen a recent rash of coyote killing contests that threaten public safety, violate the principles of fair chase, and are not biologically sound.

- **Killing contests are not hunting.** They are in fact designed to reward people for killing the most animals they can, a concept much different than what guides most hunters concerned with conservation. Prizes for these contests have included monetary incentives and semiautomatic rifles. These contests are unethical and offend our community's sense of common decency. They send a dangerous message to our children that life is cheap in New Mexico and that senseless killing is a cause for celebration.
- **Killing contests present a public safety risk.** Contest organizers often refuse to make the contest guidelines or locations public and since some target species are unprotected, contests can occur at any time of year. Because the public has no indication of where or when contest shooters will be present, people and their pets are put at unnecessary risk of being shot while enjoying New Mexico's "great outdoors".
- **Many gun owners and hunters oppose killing contests.** Public opposition to killing contests is not based on anti-gun or anti-hunting viewpoints. One-third of New Mexicans who signed a November 2012 petition against a Los Lunas-based coyote-killing contest identified themselves as gun owners. Ten percent identified themselves as hunters and/or anglers.
- **Indiscriminate mass killing of coyotes is an inefficient management technique.** A three-year N.M. Department of Game & Fish program (2000-2003) that killed over 1,200 coyotes, ostensibly to protect deer herds, was scrapped after there was no evidence the killing increased fawn survival. (Albuquerque Journal, 7/16/2003, "State Halts War on Coyotes"). Published

research shows that random killing of coyotes leads to a disruption in their social structure, causing increased breeding within the pack, resulting in an overall increase in population.

▪▪ **Killing contests violate the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation**, which sets forth that wildlife should only be killed for a legitimate purpose and where science is the proper tool for directing wildlife policy. Published scientific studies consistently show that indiscriminate killing of coyotes is an ineffective management technique. In addition, sportsmen and conservationists such as Aldo Leopold have long recognized the importance of predators—the victims of many killing contests—in ecological balance and wellbeing. Killing contests more closely resemble the reckless slaughter of North America’s bison over one hundred years ago than today’s regulated and responsible wildlife management lauded by conservationists and sportsmen alike.

▪▪ **Killing contests are unnecessary to prevent injury to livestock.** Weather and disease account for the majority of livestock losses, while predation accounts for only a small percentage. The booklet “Lines of Defense: Coping with Predators in the Rocky Mountain Region,” available from the USDA-APHIS website, states that as a livestock producer, “Your first line of defense against predators involves using good animal husbandry practices. As a general rule, the more effort expended with livestock, particularly during vulnerable periods, the less opportunity predators will have to take animals.” National Agricultural Statistics Service data show that for cattle, more than 95% of losses are attributed to causes other than predation.

THE SOLUTION:

👉 New Mexico should ban unethical, unnecessary and counter-productive coyote killing contests. **Coyote killing contests reflect poorly on our state.** N.M. killing contests have attracted national and even international outrage. Coyote killing contests do not improve our state’s reputation, nor do they help to attract businesses and new residents, because they promote wanton killing that many people find abhorrent.