



**To:** **Executive Director Scott Mason**  
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department  
11 Hazen Drive  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

**Re:** **House Bill 1308 – An Act Prohibiting the Capture, Possession,  
and Propagation of Hares and Rabbits for Hunting Dog  
Training and Field Trials**

**Position:** **Oppose**

**Date:** **December 14, 2021**

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Executive Director Mason:

My name is Joseph Mullin and I am the Assistant Manager, Northeastern States for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF). As an avid sportsman and hunting dog owner, I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 1308 (HB 1308) when considering taking Departmental stances on filed legislation. This bill that would unduly hinder the sporting dog community by prohibiting individuals and sporting dog clubs from the live taking of snowshoe hares or rabbits from the wild for the purpose of using them for dog training, to stock a training site, or in field trials. Hunting with dogs is a long-standing tradition in New Hampshire that is an important component of the state's cultural fabric, and it contributes to the state's economy and conservation funding. Curbing their training by restricting the use of wild rabbits and hares is a proxy affront on hunting and many other outdoor sporting opportunities.

Since 1989, CSF has dedicated itself to the mission of working with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the conservation interests of America's hunters and anglers.

Across the nation, the special roles that dogs play in the hunting community primarily consists of tracking game, pointing and flushing upland birds, and retrieving downed waterfowl. In all respects, dogs serve as a valuable asset to sportsmen and are treated as such. Working with dogs

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is a cherished part of the hunting tradition for many. Sportsmen and women have a strong attachment to, and affinity for, their four-legged hunting partners and often dedicate significant time and money into the training and upkeep of their dogs' skills. In New Hampshire, dogs are a regular part of the hunting culture and play a vital role to volunteer leashed dog trackers, and to sportsmen in the field and on the water.

New Hampshire is known throughout the region for its wide array of hunting opportunities – many of which rely on the use of well-trained dogs while afield; two such pursuits are rabbit and hare hunting. In preparation for these seasons, a dog is commonly trained over live, captured rabbits and/or hares under environments that simulate situations the dog will see in the field. The use of these rabbits and hares is also an important component to field trials, during which a dog's ability to perform under hunting conditions is both tested and scored. As someone who has spent countless hours training a hunting dog, I can attest to the value and ethics behind preparing your dog for the conditions it will see in the field, which includes tracking and retrieving – something that cannot be adequately replicated without the use of live game. Similarly, as someone who has enjoyed time in one of New Hampshire's gemstone hunting preserves, I have firsthand knowledge of the effectiveness of hunting over a dog that has spent considerable time with such training. By prohibiting the use of wild hares and rabbits for dog training, to stock a training site, or in field trials, HB 1308 will have two likely effects: it will send undertrained and underqualified dogs into the field in the pursuit of game, and it will drive a significant portion of New Hampshire's dog training business into surrounding states, such as Maine and Vermont. Those of us who enjoy hunting and competing with dogs in the Granite State implore your swift opposition to HB 1308.

For the reasons mentioned above, I encourage you to oppose HB 1308 when taking a Departmental position on filed legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require any additional information on this, or any other sportsmen-related topic, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph D. Mullin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Joseph Mullin  
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