



To: House Committee on Environment
115 State Street
Room EA
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: House Bill 132 – An Act Relating to the Taking of Furbearers

Position: Oppose

Date: 2/19/2025

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Environment,

My name is Fred Bird, and I am the Northeastern States Manager for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), a Vermont hunting license holder, and a prior New Hampshire Fish and Game Commissioner for Strafford County representing over 137,000 constituents. I am writing to you today in opposition to House Bill 132 (HB 132). Of concern, are the proposed changes to the methods of take and management of Vermont’s furbearing species as prescribed by regulations from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VTFWD) and the ceding of rule making authority to the legislature.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

HB 132 seeks to address and prohibit longstanding practices and traditions as it concerns the taking of furbearers with the aid of baiting practices. Baiting is an effective and ethical means of assisting take. Prohibitions of such methods would disrupt the management practices of Vermont’s furbearing species where such practices contribute to the legal take and resulting furbearer management of such species. For example, with no natural predators on the landscape, coyote management is left to sportsmen and women who elect to pursue such quarry at the direction of, and prescribed methodology from the VTFWD, which includes the approved means of assisting take.

The VTFWD has long been recognized as the primary and most well-equipped manager of fish and wildlife in the Green Mountain State. The VTFWD is staffed by trained professionals with backgrounds in a wide variety of expertise, including biology, law enforcement, land management, wildlife biology, and numerous other disciplines. These professionals carry out on-the-ground conservation efforts and possess an intimate understanding of the states' conservation priorities. VTFWD and their Board of Commissioners is therefore uniquely positioned as the appropriate authority to make any changes to current hunting practices or method of take should science support the need for a change. Should any changes be warranted CSF highly encourages that those decisions be driven by the professional fish and wildlife managers that the state has trusted to protect Vermont's cherished public trust resources through the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

With the above points in mind, I respectfully request that the members of this Committee oppose the passage of House Bill 132 and protect the authority and integrity of the rules and season setting of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Board. I appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments and welcome any questions that you may have. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Bird', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Fred Bird
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