



March 3, 2025

Memorandum of Support S.5402/A.1229

S.5402/A.1229 Hoylman-Sigal/Carroll protects wolves by requiring that large wild canids taken by hunters and trappers be sampled for DNA analysis. The DNA results are critical to understanding the genetic makeup of wild canids in the State and in assessing the presence of wolves that have periodically migrated into New York from the Great Lakes and Canada. The bill also requires the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to prepare a report on the status of wolves in New York State and to update its hunting and trapping educational materials to provide information about wolves, including how to distinguish a wolf from a coyote when a hunter or trapper is in the field.

This bill will protect wolves by requiring DEC to collect DNA samples from large wild canids with specified characteristics that are harvested by hunters and trappers in New York. The bill defines “wild canids” to include coyotes and wolves, including canids that when taken were thought to be coyotes but subsequent DNA analysis reveals to be wolves. The data collected will help DEC to identify areas of the state where wolves may be present and provide DEC biologists with important genetic data on the relationship between coyote and wolf populations in the state. The legislation does not reduce the hunting season or decrease bag limits for hunters and trappers lawfully killing coyotes or other game animals in New York State.

Hunters and trappers will be required to report to DEC each coyote that is harvested, which will provide crucial information about how many are taken and where they were located when taken. This reporting requirement is similar to what hunters and trappers already are obligated to do for other game species so that DEC can make informed choices when managing those species.

In addition, wild canids that are taken and that weigh more than 50 pounds will be sampled for DNA analysis, paid for by DEC, to determine the genetic composition of the animal. If the DNA analysis shows that the animal is a wolf, DEC must determine the location where the animal was taken and, if it determines that there is a reasonable likelihood that other wolves may be present in that area, DEC may use its existing statutory authority to take steps it deems appropriate to protect such additional wolves. DEC will be required to post on its website information about the DNA testing of wild canids.

The bill also requires DEC to update its hunting and trapping educational materials to provide information about wolves, including the legal protections for wolves, the checking and tagging requirements for wild canids imposed by the new law, and how to distinguish a wolf

from a coyote when a hunter or trapper is in the field. In addition, within three years of the effective date, DEC must submit to the Legislature and post on its website a report on the status of wolves in the State, and must update the report every six years.

For all of these reasons, Protect the Adirondacks supports S.5402/A.1229.

For more information:

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