

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to oppose the provision in SB 101 that would make leg snares legal in CT. There are compelling reasons why these snares are currently illegal in CT and other states including Arizona, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Vermont: beyond the obvious cruelty to the wildlife unfortunate enough to run afoul of them, who injure and even asphyxiate themselves as they struggle to get free from the snares' hold on their legs or neck, these snares pose significant dangers to domestic animals as well, as in the case of Scooter, a Brittany Spaniel who was strangled to death by a snare hidden a few feet off a walking path in a Woolwich, NJ park (http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2013/02/hunting_snare_kills_woolwich_f.html). Advocates of this provision to SB 101 may point to the Collarum snare as a safer and more "humane" alternative to the more dangerous types of snares critics often refer to, and while its target specificity and low injury rate might cast it in a favorable light, it is not without its flaws: for instance, a 2011 report by the USGS found that the Collarum does occasionally, and even kill, animals it catches (<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2011/1190/appendix.pdf>). Clearly any device intended to immobilize an animal is not without such flaws: a wild animal who finds him or herself unexpectedly restrained will instinctively fight against his or her captivity, even if doing so results in self-injury.

However, even discussing the "cruelty" or "humaneness" of these snares misses the larger point entirely. The push for legalizing these devices is rooted in a desire to trap and kill animals either deemed "undesirable" as pests or "desirable" as furbearers. Either way, the fate of the animals caught in these snares is the same: a needless death. Coyotes, for instance, have become a part of the Connecticut ecosystem, and Connecticut residents need to learn to coexist with them rather than try to "manage" them in the hopes of creating a perfectly anthropocentric utopia in which we can pretend that we are somehow "separate" from the non-human world. The CT DEEP recommends several commonsense measures residents can take to live with coyotes that don't involve trapping and killing them (<http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=325992>), and as the Humane Society points out, attempts at controlling the coyote population through hunting, trapping, and other lethal means often backfire and result in increases in coyote populations (http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/wild_neighbors/coyote_conflict_solutions.pdf). Certainly we can begin to move toward a model of coexisting with the non-human world rather than trying to "manage" it to suit our needs.

For these reasons, I encourage you to oppose SB 101. Thank you for your time.

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