

H.B. 2728, "Relating to wildlife . . . Prohibits . . . taking coyotes for cash or prizes."

Testimony Submitted by Albert LePage, Eugene, OR, February 4, 2021

A stone hits the water and the ripples spread out.

Killing coyotes for money or prizes, that's the stone.

I'm here today, to talk about, the ripples.

The first ripple for me was before the killing began, when I contacted the Governor's office to ask that she intervene in 2018.

The second ripple was when the killing was happening. A deep sadness, a sadness so deep that I could not even cry. A kind of sadness I had never known, before my beloved Olivia died three years ago. A sadness that's with me still, and I know, always will be.



The next, when I presented testimony at the 2019 legislative hearing on the same bill, and again with testimony submitted in 2020 . . . and now, yet again, in submitting this testimony in 2021. *Please, let this be the last year.*

There's other ripples, too, found in newspaper stories, in the thoughts and feelings of others affected by the killing.

The bill before us today is yet another ripple . . . so is this hearing, and again, my written testimony itself.

I truly believe that as a person's awareness grows, so does their compassion. And the depth of their awareness, likewise leads to deeper levels of compassion. Such awareness though, requires time and energy, a willingness to be open and listen, and to be affected -- to be changed by what one learns. Such has been my experience in life.

So now I jump in, to share my deeper ripples of sadness, born of compassion.

I am sad for the death of these animal beings -- like all beings just trying to survive -- their lives being seen by some as having no value.

I am sad for science -- that long held beliefs persist -- and dismiss, ignore or deny the realities of wildlife biology.

I am sad for the earth -- because such killing teaches children and young adults -- not stewardship, but the destruction of a specific species. And since everything is connected within the natural world, the ripple of death spreads to affect other species, surrounding habitat, and ultimately, everyone, and the earth itself.

Lastly, *I am sad* for society -- for a society that would allow such killing -- and especially . . . if it's allowed to continue.

This testimony is the stone I cast once again, as a life-affirming ripple, not only for coyotes, but also for people and the earth itself.

I ask you to "cast your stone upon the waters" . . . to cast your vote for H.B. 2728 . . . *to create your own ripples on behalf of coyotes, science, society, and the earth itself.*

Individuals, many human and all wildlife, will be grateful for your heartfelt and compassionate, rational and scientific consideration -- and immediate action -- in this regard.

Al LePage, Eugene, Oregon 02-04-2021