

## MA District Representative [Stephen Kulik's](#) 2017-18 wildlife management bill:

### H.442 "An Act conserving our natural resources"

**Soliciting support for H.442 to effectively address Coyote, Beaver and other wildlife species prone to conflicts with people, landowners, towns and municipalities**

**Provides reasonable modifications to the existing law 'Chapter 131, Section 80a' regulating the take of furbearers, enabling the law to be effective for proactive wildlife population management, while being responsive to conflicts with people and animal welfare.** The current law limits capture methods to cage style devices during the proactive regulated harvest season. [House Bill 442 legislation](#) will allow effective and efficient devices that are currently used under 10-day reactive emergency permits, to be used during the established regulated, proactive season(s) established the the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW).

**Does not repeal the current law:** The current language in Massachusetts General Law 'Chapter 131, section 80a' enacted in 1996 and amended in 2000 remains intact for hazardous health and safety situations that occur *outside* the established regulated furbearer season in it's entirety. *During* the furbearer harvest season determined by the DFW between the months of November and April - regulations derived by the DFW take precedent.

**Establishes the MA DFW as the lead division responsible for creating effective, proactive regulation, management strategies and methods** that are extensively tested, safe, efficient and have the welfare of the animal as a high priority.

**Establishes a "partnership of responsibility"**. Ensures the DFW and the Department of Public Health (DPH) will work together, to proactively manage wildlife populations and efficiently address problem animal conflicts before the situation becomes dire when possible. This legislation provides a unique opportunity where two state departments share the responsibility to manage wildlife and conflicts effectively year round.

**Establishes the MADFW as the 'go to' experts on animal restraints and capture devices.** All capture or restraint devices allowed by law must first have regulations developed by the DFW and approved by it's Board of Directors before their appropriate deployment. The DPH would defer to the DFW for guidance in this area. Subsequently, no device is made immediately available merely because it is written into the law.

**DFW determines the established harvest season length during the autumn and winter months annually.** The taking of furbearers is a highly regulated activity above and beyond simply what types of devices are made available for use. Typically, trapping seasons in Massachusetts fall within the months of November and April. With the exception of beaver and muskrat, *all* harvest activity in is currently confined to the single month of November. This legislation relies on our DFW wildlife biologists and managers to determine season lengths and the general number of animals taken based on collected data and information.

**Has the welfare of the animal as a top priority.** No matter what one's own background or knowledge on wildlife issues is, no one with an ounce of compassion, ethical integrity, or humanity has a desire to see another living thing suffer needlessly. This includes trappers, wildlife managers, conservationists and wildlife biologists. The desire to partake in proactive wildlife management and participate in the actual act of taking an animals life does not make these people inherently bad or immoral. In fact, the lengths and efforts taken by these groups to minimize or eliminate potential suffering are substantial. A tremendous amount of emphasis is place on animal welfare. Trapping "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) by species have been developed nationally and international standards are followed to ensure the welfare of the animal remains a top priority in state wildlife management plans. This legislation ensures this high ethical standard remains embedded into the trapping law by maintaining the DFW in the regulatory process to a high degree.

