STATE OF NEW YORK

7927

IN SENATE

January 3, 2024

Introduced by Sen. HOYLMAN-SIGAL -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to protecting wolves

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The environmental conservation law is amended by adding a new section 11-0541 to read as follows:

§ 11-0541. Protection of wolves.

1. All wild canids taken in the state shall be checked and tagged in a manner to be determined by the department. For purposes of this section, "wild canids" shall mean coyotes, including canids that when taken were thought to be coyotes but which subsequent DNA analysis revealed to be wolves.

2. Wild canids that are taken that have a weight greater than fifty pounds or that meet additional criteria established by the department shall be subjected to a DNA analysis, paid for by the department, to determine the genetic composition of the animal. Such analysis shall be conducted by a reputable laboratory that has prior experience genotyping hybridized Canis populations in the eastern United States. The results of any analysis performed shall promptly be provided to the public by posting on the department's website.

3. In the event that the department determines, based on DNA analysis or other scientific method, and after a public comment period of not less than thirty days, that a wild canid taken in the state is a wolf, the department shall:

(a) determine the location where the wolf was taken and determine, based on field research, whether there may be additional wolves in the vicinity;

(b) impose a moratorium on the taking of wild canids, in a specific area of the state, for as long as the department determines is necessary to protect any wolves in the occupied wolf territory and any potential adjacent territories; and

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(c) inform the public of the moratorium through posting of written notices in the moratorium area and on the department's website.

4. No later than January first, two thousand twenty-six, the department shall submit to the legislature a report on the status of wolves in the state, based on field surveys, scat collection and analysis, howling surveys, DNA analysis, trail cameras and other methods as determined by the department. The status report shall be simultaneously posted on the department's website.

5. The department shall modify its hunting and trapping training curriculum to include educational information concerning the presence of wolves in the state, the legal protections for wolves, the checking and tagging requirements for wild canids, and how to distinguish a wolf from a coyote when a hunter or trapper is in the field.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.