“The sky met the earth again, and Coyote came forth. ~ Tohono O’odham Creation Story

Dear Artist,

Art has the power to change the world. As an actor and a former member of the Literature Panel of the National Endowment of the Arts and then Chairman of the California State Arts Council under Governor Brown, I understand the impact the creative arts have on our history, our lives, and our future. While serving as chairman of the California Arts Council, I introduced the idea of artists, like coyotes, as “creative problem-solvers”. I believe within the artist and his or her art rests the potential to change the way we see our world and ourselves. Your internal “wildness” needs to be connected to wild carnivores and wilderness.

Man’s relationship to “the wild” ranges from fear and misunderstanding to deep reverence and connection. While some see savages, the pitiless, competitors in a struggle for scarce resources, and even vermin, others see exquisite beings with intrinsic worth, more like us than not. In many ways, we might even see ourselves represented in Wolf, Coyote, and Mountain Lion, as artists have so beautifully portrayed throughout history. Tragically, victims of man’s fear, misunderstanding, and self-interest, predators suffer unimaginable persecution. History teaches us misunderstanding and fear unabated, turned outward, can result in mass persecution, as evidenced by the near extinction of wolves, mountain lions, bobcats and grizzly bears throughout their historic range.

North America’s native wild “Song Dog” deserves special mention as the legendary shape shifter who has adapted to challenges ranging from Pleistocene extinctions to recent human persecution. Coyote has inspired artists and storytellers for generations. A legendary survivor, coyotes have fascinated humans throughout history. While inspiring artists from varied cultures, coyotes have been most richly documented in the art and stories of Native Americans. They are often the centerpiece of story telling, spirituality, and transformation.

I joined Project Coyote’s advisory board as a strong advocate for predator protection and because I believe in the effectiveness of Project Coyote’s sustained, science-based, grassroots activism. Project Coyote has effectively mobilized individuals and communities for the benefit of native carnivores and their habitats- the “rewilding” of North America. They are leaders in shifting our society from killing to coexistence and working to change state and federal laws and policies responsible for the poisoning, trapping, snaring, and aerial gunning of hundreds of thousands of native carnivores each year. As a long time passionate advocate for wildlife and wild nature, with a special interest in and regard for coyotes, I joined Project Coyote’s advisory board to contribute to our shared vision of peaceful coexistence, compassionate conservation, and a healthy sustainable environment.
Project Coyote is interested in partnering with artists who champion Wild Nature and the rewilding of North America through their art, music, and stories. *Artists for Wild Nature* transforms attitudes from fear and ignorance to understanding and respect. I share this vision and believe its power.

Through collaboration with Project Coyote, artists have an opportunity to offer aid to wild victims of human fear and ignorance. Whether a song, a painting, a poem, a sculpture, a film, an essay, a novel, or a short story, art has the power to reach many more people with a message of compassionate conservation, coexistence and community.

It is my hope and the hope of Project Coyote that as we become more familiar with the wild carnivores’ story and celebrate their intelligence and beauty as depicted through the vision and voice of the imaginative artist, we will find ourselves moving further from persecution toward compassion, empathy and peaceful coexistence. We welcome your help in telling the *Song Dog* story, the Wolf, the Cougar- whatever your vision of Wild Nature- as uniquely portrayed through you, the artist’s vision and “wild” talent. Through art, photos, stories, poems, film, and music, we can further advance coyote and carnivore protection. Thank you for extending your vision and generosity to our wild kin.

Sincerely,

Peter Coyote
Project Coyote Advisory Board
Actor, author, narrator & conservationist