

# Fairfield County Municipal Deer Management Alliance

P.O. Box 186  
Georgetown, CT 06829  
February 22, 2007

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Mary Ann Handley, Co-chair  
Peggy Sayers, Co-chair  
Public Health Committee  
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: House Bill No. 5747: To mandate that clinical laboratories notify the Department of Public Health of all cases of positive Lyme disease results.

Dear Ms. Handley and Ms. Sayers;

The Fairfield County Municipal Deer Management Alliance supports of House Bill No. 5747, which would reinstate reporting requirements of positive Lyme disease cases. The Alliance, established in 2004, is a committee of municipally appointed members representing 14 Fairfield County towns. The composition of the Alliance is a mixture of municipal employees from health, conservation, and animal control departments and knowledgeable residents with varying backgrounds. The purpose of the Alliance is to pool our resources to educate the public, keep abreast of pertinent research, promote and support initiatives to reduce deer densities, and work with the legislative and regulatory entities to further facilitate deer management. Deer overpopulation negatively impacts our natural resources, public safety, and public health. Of particular concern regarding public health is the rate of Lyme disease, which is directly related to deer density. As part of the Alliance's mission, we provide public education regarding the prevalence of Lyme disease and steps individuals and communities can take to lower the rate of infection.

Since the reporting requirements ceased several years ago, there is an erroneous appearance that the rate of infection has dropped. Given that the media largely reports in sound bite format, the message public hears is that reported cases of Lyme disease are down leaving one to conclude that the risk is down as well. This false sense of security makes it difficult to motivate individuals and communities to take preventative measures.

Secondly, while the Alliance and others forge ahead touting strategies to reduce exposure, we have no basis of comparison to draw conclusions regarding the efficacy of any of these measures.

HB#5747 provides a critical link for the public to understand the magnitude of the problem and help organizations advocating prevention options with the tools to effectively gauge their progress. The Fairfield County Municipal Deer Management Alliance encourages your support of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Sesto  
Chairman

cc: Representative Jason Bartlett