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Testimony presented to the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

IN SUPPORT of Committee Bill S.B. No. 116 AN ACT CONCERNING CAMPING FEES PAID BY STATE RESIDENTS AND NONRESIDENTS AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN HUNTING OF DEER BY PISTOL AND REVOLVER.

by Robert T. Crook, Director March 12, 2010

We fully agree with lowering camping fees for state residents and non-residents from their current levels. The recreational/economic arguments are similar to those concerning sportsmen's fees: current fees will price out both residents and non-residents, promote them to recreate in other states, negatively impact retail establishments and state tax revenue, and reduce outdoor activity in the state.

We fully Support implementation of hunting of deer by pistols and revolvers. This is a revenue raiser, and applies Only to private land of 10 or more acres with the permission of the landowner, and only in current firearm hunting seasons. This option is in effect in many states.

Below is proposed Substitute and similar language adopted by many states incorporating most elements found in the bill (lines 97-103):

Section 26-86a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(NEW) (c) No person may use a handgun for the pursuit, taking or attempted taking of deer on privately owned lands, except under the following conditions: (1) The commissioner shall issue, upon payment of a five-dollar fee, to the owner of ten or more acres of private land or a resident of this state, who has the consent of the owner of ten or more acres of private land, a private land pistol or revolver permit that allows the use of a pistol or revolver, as defined in section 29-27, to hunt deer from November first to December thirty-first, inclusive, pursuant to the bag limit established for a private land deer permit under this subsection. [Any person authorized to hunt deer by pistol or revolver pursuant to this subsection shall use a cartridge of .22 caliber or larger for such purpose.] (2) the handgun shall be limited to revolvers and single shot pistols with a minimum barrel length of 5.75 inches and not exceeding 12.5 inches and chambered for and using straight-wall handgun ammunition in .357 magnum, .41 caliber, .41 magnum, .44 caliber, 44 magnum, .45 caliber, .454 caliber, .480 caliber (3) or single shot muzzle-loading handguns during muzzleloader season; (4) the handgun must be carried openly on a sling or in a holster and not concealed while hunting; (5) shall be used exclusively during any rifle/shotgun or muzzleloader season as applicable during which deer may be taken. Handguns described in subsection (2) shall only apply to Connecticut residents holding a valid Connecticut permit to carry a pistol or revolver and muzzleloading handgun hunting shall be permitted only by those eighteen years or older.

We Question the inclusion of "A firearms hunting or a combination firearms hunting and fishing license shall not authorize the carrying or possession of a pistol or revolver except as provided in section 23-16 "Leases of camp sites"(Line 141) as being not applicable to Section 26-35.

Thank you.