

Dear Senator Meyers, Representative Roy, Representative Bye & Members of the Environment Committee:

I write to respectfully request that you support Senate Bill 116 (An Act Concerning Camping Fees Paid By State Residents And Nonresidents And Authorizing Certain Hunting Of Deer By Pistol And Revolver), which I understand is set for a public hearing today, March 12, 2010. Unfortunately, I cannot attend that hearing due to a scheduling conflict. I hereby submit these written comments endorsing Senate Bill 116.

As you well know, the hunting of deer, whether by archery, rifle/shotgun and/or pistol, is the most effective means of managing these animals. Already hamstrung by antiquated "blue laws" prohibiting Sunday hunting in this State, Senate Bill 116 would permit additional opportunities for hunters. Indeed, this is not a novel concept given that most states permit hunting (big and small game, subject to regulation) with pistols and revolvers, as well as archery and rifle/shotgun. Only a handful of states still prohibit Sunday hunting and each year

The claims about purported safety issues and putting more guns into the general population are completely unfounded and unsupported. These are traditional arguments employed by anti-hunters and anti-gun persons that have long been rejected. First, hunting is very safe relative to other recreational activities. Second, the "hunter" class or demographic generally is not comprised of criminals. Third, the proposed regulations would track normal rifle/shotgun regulations. Fourth, the pistol permit process is very rigorous and would effectively weed out those persons attempting to obtain a pistol permit for hunting. Fifth, the class of current pistol permit holders is relatively small, and even a small number of those persons would actually purchase the hunting permit. I implore you and the Committee members to review hunter safety statistics in this State as well as others, as well as speak with DEP wildlife officials concerning the most effective and most efficient means of managing wildlife populations. I am not aware of any federal or state wildlife agency that does not endorse hunting (rifle/shotgun/archery/pistol) to manage wildlife

The only thing I would change about the Bill is the required minimum caliber. I would recommend a minimum caliber of .357 or larger.

In conclusion, I request that you support Senate Bill 116.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Tom Bletchley