

COALITION OF CONNECTICUT SPORTSMEN

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Testimony presented to the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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IN SUPPORT of RAISED Bill *S.B. No. 83 (RAISED) AN ACT AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON SUNDAY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES..

by Robert T. Crook, Director.

Sportsmen fully support limited Sunday Hunting as proposed by DEEP. This bill will help accomplish DEEP Wildlife Management Objectives and is a revenue raiser. It will also promote more licensed hunters afield, particularly those that work 6 days per week; new or traditional family hunting activity promoting youth involvement; the No Child Left Inside program; and enhance meat donations to the Hunters for the Hungry Program. The bill allows Bowhunting, Private Land only, Written Permission of the Landowner, Deer only.

Indisputable Facts:

- 1. Deer numbers are increasing, while the numbers of hunters is decreasing.**
- 2. Deer/Car collisions, Lyme disease occurrence, and property damage are all increasing.**
- 3. Hunting is the ONLY proven population management technique available for Deer.**
- 4. DEEP Wildlife Management has resulted in population balance on most State lands; overpopulation problems are on privately owned lands.**
- 5. Increases Harvest: About 20-22% of Deer are taken by bow; 6-8% by muzzleloader; the remainder by rifle/shotgun 70-75%. "The deer harvest on Saturdays during the firearms season is 76% greater than the average harvest on weekdays." (DEP, Dep. Comm. Leff, 2006). The Saturday data applies equally to bowhunting.**
- 6. Inclement weather on Saturdays, significantly reduces take and management.**
- 7. SAFETY: In over a century of record keeping, there has been NO instance of Bowhunting injury/death of non-hunting participants!**
- 8. Recruiting new hunters.** Many young people have school or athletic obligations on Saturday. Sunday hunting promotes parents time to hunt with their son or daughter. With the myriad of activities that compete for the attention of young people today, a Sunday hunting restriction means many of them never take up the hunting activity.
- 9. Eliminates the last remaining CT Blue Law.** In early America, religious blue laws restricted many activities on Sunday. However, most states have recognized the people's right to choose for themselves what they do, or don't do, on Sunday is consistent with America's founding principles. CT has one of the few holdout bans on blue law Sunday hunting, and CT hunters' question why they are being treated differently from their fellow Americans. (44 States have Sunday Hunting; those that do not are of the original 13 colonies).

The economic impact of instituting Sunday Hunting is substantial and we fully expect that it will improve significantly due to both resident and non-resident hunters increased participation. Few non-resident hunters will take extended hunting trips to a state doesn't allow weekend hunting. These out-of-state hunters pay higher license fees benefitting DEEP and spend even more money than in-state hunters on gas, food, lodging and other incidentals. ALL Resident hunters averaged 12.2 trips and nonresidents 3.0 trips in Connecticut. Based on 2010 hunting licensees, resident hunters undertook 770 thousand trips and nonresident hunters 9.8 thousand.

Total Hunting expenditures in Connecticut are impressive at \$109.3 million in 2010 dollars. Using a few of the most common costs (in 1,000s \$): Food and Lodging 2,801.5; Hunting Equipment 29,266.3; Transportation 5,365.5, with approximately 60,000 hunters in the state. http://www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/outdoor_recreation/2011economicimpactstudy.pdf Table 3.2.3.

The CT Sunday Hunting prohibition has been an impediment to DEEP wildlife management for too long. This bill will allow DEEP wildlife experts to set seasons/take to improve Deer management. We urge you refuse to maintain the status quo which ignores obvious ecological problems due to Deer overpopulation: Forest regeneration (non-game species declines), Public safety (Deer/Car Collisions), Public health (Lyme disease), and property damage — all clearly not in the public interest.

Thank you.