NORTHWEST CT SPORTSMAN'S COUNCIL

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March 7, 2012

Connecticut Legislature
Environment Committee

Re: March 7, 2012 Environment Public Hearing

Members of the Environment Committee:

I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Northwest CT Sportsman's Council. The Council is a coalition of sportsmen's clubs and organizations with a combined membership of 6,000 plus citizens of CT. I serve as Secretary on the Council and have been authorized by our delegates to address the Environment Committee's Public Hearing.

Our Council supports the following bills now under review:

S.B. No. 83 An Act Authorizing Bow And Hunting On Sunday Under Certain Circumstances.

It is our understanding that this is a DEEP sponsored proposal which will allow the Comissioner of DEEP the authority to open certain parcels of private land to Sunday Archery Hunting based on management needs.

We support this proposal from the standpoint that it allows for scientific deer management, while at the same time addressing the need of many sportsmen who work six days a week the opportunity to enjoy their sport on the only day available to them to recreate.

Further, this proposal will provide substantial revenue to DEEP, which Agency we feel is currently underfunded. And, it respects the rights of private landowners to choose how their property will be utilized by the public.

H.B. No. 5261 An Act Concerning The Hunting Of Deer With A Pistol.

We strongly support the concept of hunting deer on private land utilizing a revolver or single-shot handgun. We testified before this committee in 2010 on a similar proposal; but apparently, confusion with the language resulted in only the revolver gaining acceptance. We now have had two years of handgun deer hunting in CT; without incident, and would ask that single shot handguns be added to the statutorily allowed implements for use.

We feel that by its very nature, a single shot firearm is the safest implement of any available to sportsmen. Our support is derived from the fact that many of our CT sportsmen own single shot handguns and want to use them for hunting, which is the primary intended use of such firearms. Most, if not all single shot handguns in use are of a break open design, which exposes the firing chamber to open view for safe carrying. Further, most single shots are designed to accept a sling attachment, which would allow for safe use in elevated stands; such as tree stands, which is the preferred method of hunting deer with a handgun. As with the revolver, the range of a single shot is fairly short, and the cartridge velocities are generally much lower than that of a rifle or shotgun.

The inclusion of single shot handguns will surely result in increased revenue to DEEP.

(over)

H.B. No.5304. An Act Concerning Charitable contributions Paid In Lieu Of Fines For Hunting And fishing Violations.

We support this bill for its obvious beneficial effects in reducing poaching by involving the public in the Turn-In-Poachers program. Less well known is the fact that these funds have also been utilized to support and maintain the two DEEP TIP trailers, which provide the best public contact and educational efforts of DEEP law enforcement. The TIP trailer program currently is suffering from a lack of revenue to update and maintain the trailers. Passage of 5304 would help alleviate this concern. We would also point out that with the Governor's budget recommendation to reduce funding for the lobster program, the additional revenue from marine settlements would help maintain that program.

Our Council opposes the following bill:

H.B. No. 5263 An Act Increasing The Penalty For Poaching.

We respectfully oppose this bill on the grounds that it does not appear to address actual poaching at all. It seems to be concerned more with trespass, which appears currently to have adequate penalties, if applied. Further; it seems that an innocent or mistaken trespass could be dealt with just as severely as a willful violation. Making the distinction between the two would be difficult and arbitrary at best.

I would like to thank the Committee for considering my testimony.

Respectfully Submitted

Chris M. Marino
Secretary: NWCSC