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March 6, 2012

Environment Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Ave.  
Hartford, CT 06016

**Re: MARCH 7, 2012 PUBLIC HEARING RE S.B. NO. 83 AN ACT AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON SUNDAY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES**

Dear Members of the Environment Committee:

I write in support of the concepts of S.B. 83, though I would strike the language restricting hunting within forty (40) yards of a blazed hiking trail on Sundays. Connecticut's Sunday hunting ban is simply an antiquated blue law that should be repealed. The proposed bill seeks to allow Sunday hunting on a very limited basis – with bow and arrow on private property with the landowner's permission.

The typical arguments against Sunday hunting find no support with respect to S.B. No. 83. The primary argument generally centers on alleged safety issues to third party non-hunters. Aside from non-hunters being free to use vast areas of public land that is off-limits to hunting, as well as not being required to pay annual license fees, the so-called safety issue is meritless and should be rejected since the proposed bill would limit Sunday hunting to private property (with the landowner's consent) solely with the use of a bow and arrow. Simple physics shows that a bow and arrow is vastly different than a firearm, and for this reason bowhunters are limited to close-range, unobstructed shots.<sup>1</sup> Further, most bowhunters hunt out of treestands, thereby creating a downward angle. These facts, coupled with the proposed bill's limiting Sunday hunting to private property (with the landowner's consent) only, renders the non-hunter safety issue a moot point. In short, there is absolutely no legitimate safety issue to non-hunters under S.B. 83.

Other arguments against Sunday hunting, i.e., religion and rest for game, are illogical and/or archaic. Concerning religion, Connecticut, like its sister states, has largely repealed its blue laws. Indeed, the vast majority of states in this country have repealed laws that ban and/or restrict Sunday hunting. Finally, any argument that game needs one day a week for relaxation, a Sunday no less, is absurd.

Connecticut's Sunday hunting ban is an antiquated creature of the past that continues to unfairly and significantly restrict a legitimate and safe sport. The nonsensical ban limits opportunities for those hunters that work traditional weekday jobs. It also has consequences on hunting, a declining sport, particularly with respect to the introduction of young persons to the sport. At this time, hunting is the only viable mechanism to manage game.

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<sup>1</sup> By no means do I concede that hunting with a firearm is unsafe. Indeed, hunter-safety statistics clearly refute that argument.

During this time of fiscal hardship, it must be recognized that the proposed legislation will not create any additional burdens on the state's economy. On the contrary, it will promote increased spending in and tax revenue for the state by way of license and hunting products sales.

As noted above, I recommend modifying S.B. 83 by striking the language restricting hunting within forty (40) years of a blazed hiking trail on Sundays. Such language is troublesome insofar as it creates confusion and onerous requirements regarding an arbitrary distance requirement from a "blazed hiking trail." More problematic is the fact that there should be no restriction at all. If a person can hunt with a bow and arrow six days a week, then why not Sunday? This is especially problematic where the proposed legislation restricts Sunday hunting to private land only with the landowner's consent. There is no legitimate reason for such restriction and the language should thus be stricken from the bill.

In summary, there is absolutely no rational basis to ban Sunday hunting with a bow and arrow on private property with the consent of the landowner. For these reasons, I urge you to support S.B. 83.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Blatchley, Esq.