



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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March 22, 2013

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Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
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Re: Please **OPPOSE HB 5412, Sunday hunting on private land**

Dear Co-Chair Meyer, Co-Chair Gentile, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut supporters of The Humane Society of the United States, I submit this letter to **OPPOSE HB 5412**, and any other attempts to expand hunting on Sundays.

This legislation takes us in precisely the wrong direction. The public does not want hunting on Sundays, and lifting the prohibition will jeopardize public safety and diminish outdoor opportunities for non-consumptive users.

Sunday hunting on private land is a slippery slope to allow Sunday hunting on all land, and does not reflect what the public wants.

Taking the first step down this slippery slope would further the interests of a tiny fraction of the population (~1%) at the expense of other citizens who have their own claim to enjoying nature. Other states, such as New Jersey and Maryland, have opened limited forms of Sunday hunting in one legislative session and then immediately proposed a complete repeal of the Sunday hunting prohibition in the following legislative session.

Wildlife watchers (defined as observing, feeding, or photographing wildlife) in Connecticut outnumber hunters in Connecticut by a margin of 29 to 1. Data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) shows the following 10-year trends: a 42% increase in the number of wildlife watchers (from 774,000 to 1,102,000), and a 39% decrease in the number of hunters (from 62,000 to 38,000). Further, wildlife watching and other outdoor recreation is an important part of Connecticut's economy: Per the USFWS data, wildlife watchers in Connecticut outspend hunters by 7.4 to 1, contributing about \$510 million to the economy annually.

Hunters already enjoy recreational opportunities disproportionate with their numbers — hunting is already permitted 6 days a week for most of the year. It is only fair that given their overwhelming majority of the state's population, non-hunters should have one day per week to enjoy Connecticut's rich natural resources in safety and peace.

Sunday hunting won't help the DEEP "manage" deer numbers or resolve deer-related conflicts.

Wild animals have high compensatory reproduction abilities which easily offset losses caused by hunting. This means that their numbers bounce back by the next breeding season due to increased litter size, breeding at an earlier age, increased juvenile survival, etc.—all

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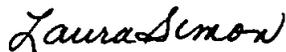
phenomenon that are biologically adapted to help wild animals recover from cyclic population losses. Hunting merely creates this bounce-back effect which in no way provides any population “control” unless a large proportion of the population is removed along with the food source and habitat features which attracted them in the first place—all of which present a virtual impossibility except in the rarest of cases.

Sunday hunting will not reduce Lyme disease risk.

The Black-legged tick has well over 100 hosts, including all mammals, many popular songbirds, and even lizards. Studies have shown that the removal of one host isn't enough to suppress the Lyme-disease causing tick (Ostfeld, 2011, Jordan et al. 2007). In addition, the ticks are highly adaptable, and will switch to other hosts when there's a shortage of their preferred host, or congregate in higher densities on the remaining deer. In addition, research indicates that hunting may put the public more at risk by creating disease "hot spots" (S. Perkins et al, 2006, Ginsberg and Zhioua, 1999; Ostfeld, 2011). That is, mature ticks that normally latch onto large hosts (i.e. deer) are more likely to end up on people and dogs after deer numbers have been reduced. There's a good reason why the CDC and health authorities don't recommend hunting to control Lyme disease - because it doesn't work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



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