

*Testimony Before the Environment Committee
In Support of HB 5412
Friday March 22 , 2013*

CT has been and continues to be ravaged by Lyme disease and other tick related diseases. The CDC, the DPH and the DEEP are in agreement that restoring deer densities to 10-12 deer per square mile will virtually eliminate Lyme and other tick related diseases in CT. The DEEP Mumford Cove study clearly demonstrated a 95%+ decline in Lyme disease when deer densities were restored to 10-12 deer per square mile. So what are we waiting for? After 15 years of deer committee meetings in various towns in Fairfield County, deer densities levels have steadily climbed. On average the residents of Fairfield County spend approximately \$950/yr combating the harmful effects of high deer densities. Taxpayers are paying a government agency to protect deer for 7½ months out of the year with penalties including confiscation of property, stiff fines and jail time. The exception being when deer come through your windshield, then you win a door prize. Perhaps windshield prize would be more fitting. Meanwhile these same protected deer are like B-52 bombers dropping billions of tick eggs in our back yards just before our children and pets go out to play.

It is time to change the narrative and the way people think about deer management from one of recreational hunting to one of solving a health crisis. We simply need to enable private landowners to reduce the deer herd in Fairfield County through a special permit program. Recreational hunting alone will never restore the herd to 10-12 deer per square mile. HB5412 would empower private land owners to address the deer problem in their own backyard outside of the traditional hunting season through a special DEEP permit similar to predation permits for geese. As responsible leaders in CT, we can no longer sit idly by and watch children suffer the senseless and avoidable impact of Lyme disease that results from excessive deer densities. Let's be part of the solution in ending human suffering from Lyme disease and support HB 5412.

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