

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

**As a resident who votes, I oppose Bill No. 6654** which would allow, among other things, the DEEP to coordinate a lottery system to hunt bears. According to Rick Jacobson, Director of Wildlife Division, **DEEP has no “formal process” to determine the bear population** (email dated January 24, 2012, see quote below). This bill to kill bears is not based in fact, scientific or otherwise.

I have seen DEEP reports on bears. *What I learned is that there are many more questions that arise from the data than answers.* When asked for data to prove that there are between 500-1000 bears as DEEP was reporting to the media in early 2012, Mr. Jacobson replied in the email dated January 24, 2012:

“The bear population estimates you refer to are not derived from direct census or a rigorous population abundance study.” And “This has not been a formal process and no documentation of the method exists. The only documentation that does exist is of the information used such as range maps and survival estimates.”

Further, as stated on DEEP’s website, “Experience has shown that a single wandering bear can be responsible for numerous sightings reported to the Wildlife Division.” And in a report from 2010, the largest incidents involving bears (at a mere 117) is bears getting at bird feeders. This is hardly a reason to take up arms against the bears.

**From the DEEP website: “Connecticut has the habitat to support more bears; however, the future of Connecticut's bear population depends on the actions and attitudes of the human population.”** The DEEP needs to be proactive in educating the public on how to peacefully co-exist with bears, especially in towns where bears have been sighted. Contact should be established with town officials to arrange informational meetings with residents to engage them or at the very least, provide them with the information instead of simply posting it on its website as happens now. Instead of spending time pushing bills to kill bears, it should be taking time to engage the public in a positive manner.

Please do not allow the DEEP free reign to organize killing of yet another species of animal, which would be completely immoral and unethical.

Respectfully submitted,

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