

Committee on the Environment

Testimony

Raised Bill 915

AN ACT AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON SUNDAY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

Submitted by : Edward Parker

Since the implementation of deer hunting in Connecticut in 1975 , the deer population has increased from approximately 19,000 deer to 126,000 deer. This growth can be attributed to two major factors. First, and foremost the proliferation of subdivisions throughout the state and mild weather winter weather. This development has provided ideal fringe habitat that deer prefer and an abundant and nutritional food supply.

To address the growing population, the DEEP has utilized all available management tools including expansion of hunting seasons, increasing tags, public education to increase access to private land, use of bait in certain areas and hunter incentives to take more deer. These efforts have slowed the rate of growth of the deer population. However, the deer population continues to grow.

The only proven management tool left is to provide additional opportunities for hunters to harvest deer. The passage of a SUNDAY HUNTING bill will increase the number of deer harvested. Deer harvest data collected by DEEP shows that the deer harvest on weekend days is more than twice that which occurs on week days and the majority of the harvest occurs on private land. Also, Sunday hunting in 42 other states has proven to be effective in increasing the harvest.

Bow hunting is also safe . Since 1975 there has not been a single incident resulting in any injury to a non hunter.

Hunting on Sunday would add 16 days of hunting when most hunters have the time off. These additional days would be entirely within the current season. To achieve the same number of additional Saturdays the deer season would have to be extended another two months.

Without additional opportunity for hunters the deer population will continue to grow and all the well known consequences associated with an overpopulation of white –tail deer will only get worse.

In summary, I urge the committee to pass raised bill 915. Further, I urge the leadership of the committee, in particular the co- chairs, vice chairs and ranking members to give this bill a very high priority and work with the leadership in the House and Senate to approve Sunday hunting. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.