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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

| Public Hearing Subject Matter | Support/ Oppose |
|--|----------------------------|
| RAISED BILL 5080: AN ACT CONCERNING DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON SUNDAYS. | Support |
| RAISED BILL 444: AN ACT CONCERNING AN IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM | Support |

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly every year since 1897 on issues such as sustainable forestry, state parks and forests, trail recreation, natural resource protection, and land conservation.

On behalf of CFPA, I testify in support of Raised Bill 5080 for a few reasons:

- 1) There is great scientific evidence that Connecticut's forests are not regenerating properly in areas where deer populations have grown beyond the carrying capacity of the land. In these areas, particularly where there are many private landowners with relatively small landholdings, bow hunting is the best option to accommodate safety and multiple recreational uses simultaneously.
- 2) CFPA would not support legislation in support of Sunday hunting if it were extended to state lands, or to forms of hunting beyond bow and arrow based on the scientific evidence that we have seen to date.
- 3) We appreciate the provision included in the bill that would provide a 40 yard buffer from bow hunting for trail users on private lands. About 50% of the blue-blazed hiking trails traverse private lands and this is an important consideration that would likely add to the peace of mind to owners of property that include trails and of trail users in areas that may allow Sunday hunting in the future.

In addition, CFPA supports Raised Bill 444: An Act Concerning an Important Bird Areas Program. One of the most popular outdoor activities in Connecticut is bird watching. For those who are bird watchers and wildlife appreciators, there is great value in identifying, establishing, and managing Important Bird Areas. We strongly support the concept of management plans that will give direction to how these Important Bird Areas should be managed to benefit the targeted bird species and habitats they depend upon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be glad to respond to any questions you may have.