

Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave Hartford, CT 06106

Distinguished Members of the Environmental Committee:

I am writing in support of H.B 5080. Connecticut's Sunday hunting ban is simply an antiquated blue law that needs to be repealed in the same way we've repealed Connecticut's other out of date blue laws.

The fact is, the vast majority of hunters work or have school from Monday through Friday. In Connecticut, unlike the majority of other states, half of our weekend is unavailable for hunting, and in fact, many have to work at least Saturday morning as well. Allowing Sunday hunting will increase the opportunities we have to enjoy the outdoors and sport we love.

Hunting is a tradition with deep roots in Connecticut and an activity shared by many families. My two children grew up hunting with me and looked forward to hunting season. However, one of our toughest challenges was aligning schedules, particularly with sports and other commitments thrown in. While I might have the opportunity to use a vacation day to hunt, my children with the exception of a few holidays had school during the week, again, leaving only one day when we could hunt together. I can't tell you how much it means as a father to be able to spend time afield with your child, watching them through the seasons mature and develop that love of the outdoors. In these times, we should be doing anything that we can to increase the opportunities for families to participate in something they share a love for.

I realize that the opposition voiced to Sunday hunting has always been that non-hunters deserve a day in the woods when they don't have to worry about hunting. That really is no argument at all. First, as you know, the proposal allows for private land hunting only. It should be left to the discretion of landowners whether they feel they would want to have a "no-hunt" day. In reality, most allow hunting on their property because like the rest of the state they are trying to reduce the ever expanding deer herd. If they choose to allow hunting both Saturday and Sunday, only someone who is trespassing would not have access to that knowledge. Given Connecticut's wealth of public land, if someone felt they wanted to be in woods where hunting was not taking place, there are more than ample opportunities.

The fact is any concern about safety is completely invalid. Bow hunting in Connecticut has a perfect safety record when it comes to non-participants. Is it really a valid concern that Sunday hunting would be doubling the 0% accident rate? Anyone even remotely familiar w/ bow hunting knows that there is no possible way for someone to accidentally be within the very limited range of an arrow (<30 yd) and not be detected and identified by the hunter.

Finally, it is well accepted and documented that all of Connecticut has problematic

levels of deer. The areas that have the most problems are those where firearms hunting is either banned due to population density, or where landowners are not comfortable with firearms hunting. For example, in Southwest Connecticut, the density of deer ranges between 40 and 100 deer per square mile. Densities in excess of 20 per mile can result in suppression of forest regeneration and reduction of biological and structural diversity. DEEP has provided ever more generous limits in an attempt to achieve acceptable populations. Bow hunting has always been the preferred solution in those areas and increased bag limits in the form of deer tags encourages hunters to harvest more deer. The one missing piece to the solution of course is opportunity.

I hope that you will thoughtfully consider these facts and move to support H.B. No. 5080. Thank you for your time in reading this testimony.

Sincerely,

Tom Maloney
North Stonington, CT