

# COALITION OF CONNECTICUT SPORTSMEN

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Testimony presented to the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, by Robert T. Crook, Director. 03/17/14

## **IN SUPPORT of H.B. No. 5080 AN ACT CONCERNING DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS.**

**This Sunday Hunting bill will help accomplish DEEP Wildlife Management Objectives, increase hunting participation, and is a revenue raiser.**

**This bill promotes Bowhunting, Private Land only, Written Permission of the Landowner, Deer only.**

**This month Virginia PASSED a similar bill: Private land. ALL Hunting implements.**

### **Indisputable Facts:**

- 1. Deer numbers are increasing, while the numbers of hunters is decreasing.**
- 2. Deer/Car collisions and property damage continue high.**
- 3. Hunting is the ONLY proven population management technique available for Deer.**
- 4. DEP Wildlife Management has resulted in population balance on most State lands; overpopulation problems are on privately owned lands.** The bill only allows bow hunting on private land by the Landowner or with written permission given to the hunter. **The landowner can still refuse hunting on Sunday.**
- 5. Increases Harvest:** In 2013, about 50% of Deer were taken by bow/crossbow; “The deer harvest on Saturdays during the firearms season is 76% greater than the average harvest on weekdays.” (DEP, Dep. Comm. Leff, 2006). The Saturday deer harvest data applies equally to bowhunting.
- 6. Inclement weather on Saturdays, significantly reduces take and management.**
- 7. SAFETY: A century+ of bowhunting record keeping demonstrates NO instance of injury/death of non-hunting participants! Nationally, CT has one of the best safety records. During the last three years there have been NO hunting accidents/incidents except a few persons falling out of tree stands.**
- 8. The bill separates hunters and other recreationalists on private land with Blue Trails although there have been NO instances of accidents/incidents on the other six days.**
- 9. Public lands (State Forests/Parks) or additional Deer tags are not included.**
- 10. Sunday Bowhunting is a Revenue Raiser** by allowing those persons who work 6 days per week to participate. Even for those who work Monday through Friday, a Sunday hunting ban cuts their available hunting time in half. The most common reason that hunters stop hunting is lack of hunting opportunity which is largely decided by two factors: accessible land and available time. **Promoting non-resident involvement:** Few hunters will take extended hunting trips to a state that won't let them to hunt on a non-work day. Out-of-state hunters pay higher license fees benefitting DEEP and spend more money than in-state hunters on gas, food, lodging and other incidentals that go along with a week-end hunt. **Recruiting new hunters.** Many young people have school or athletic obligations on Saturday. Sunday hunting allows parents time to hunt with their son/daughter. With the myriad of activities that compete for the attention of young people today, a Sunday hunting restriction means many of them never take up the sport.
- 11. Eliminates the last remaining CT Blue Law.** In original colony states, so-called Blue Laws restricted many activities on Sunday. The current ban on Sunday hunting is the last holdout of CT blue

laws, and hunters are questioning why they are being treated differently from their fellow citizens. (44 States have Sunday Hunting).

For too long the Sunday Hunting prohibition has been an impediment to DEP wildlife management. This bill will allow DEP wildlife experts to set seasons/take to improve Deer management. We'd ask you to refuse to maintain the status quo which ignores obvious ecological problems (Forestry regeneration, non-game species declines), public safety (Deer/Car Collisions), public health (Lyme disease), and property damage problems.

We urge you to Support Sunday Hunting and act to promote this effort as essential to wildlife management and the public interest of the state. **If Not Sunday Hunting – What IS the solution to a DEEP Deer management problem?**