

Environment Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Ave Hartford, CT 06106  
Co-Chair: Senator Meyer  
Co-Chair: Representative Gentile  
Members of the Committee

I am submitting this testimony in support of H.B. 5080: AN ACT CONCERNING DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS

This bill is based on sound environmental science and provides a means for effectively controlling the overpopulation of deer in our state, which is well documented. The population density established by DEEP for a healthy and sustainable deer population in balance with the ecosystem is less than or equal to 20 deer per square mile. There are 13 deer management zones in Connecticut. Only five zones are at goal. The other 8 zones, which include 123 towns out of 169 have an overabundant deer population. Three of the 8 zones have deer densities of 20 to 32 deer per square mile. Three zones have a population of 32 to 56 deer per square mile and two zones have more than 56 deer per square mile.

In order to achieve healthy population goals statewide, hunters need additional opportunities to hunt on weekend days on private property in the overpopulated management zones. Allowing hunting on Sunday to the existing bow hunting season will provide an additional 16 days of hunting when most hunters have the day off. Harvest data collected for many years by DEEP indicates that the number of deer killed on weekend days is more than twice the number killed on weekdays. Also, hunting on Sunday in 42 other states has proven to be effective in increasing the deer harvest. Connecticut's bow hunters harvest 50% of all deer taken during the hunting season. Deer hunting with a bow and arrows is safe. It does not jeopardize public safety. There has never been an incident involving bow hunting that has resulted in injury to a non-hunter since bow hunting was established in Connecticut over 35 years ago. Bow and arrow hunting does not limit outdoor opportunities on private property. Since hunters must obtain written permission from the landowner to hunt, private landowners determine what recreational activities they will allow on their property.

The impact of the overpopulation of deer in our state includes deer/vehicle collisions, crop damage, landscape damage on private property, habitat destruction which affects fauna and flora, and a high incidence of Lyme disease. Every year the economic impact of an overabundant deer population in Connecticut likely exceeds 100 million dollars. In just one town – Redding, deer damage in 2010 was estimated to be approximately 4.5 million dollars. Redding is just 1 of 123 towns that fall within the 8 deer management zones that exceed population goals.

On behalf of the Connecticut Falconers Association, and as an active member of the Conservation Advisory Council, I urge the environment committee to pass this bill. Further, I respectfully request that the committee co-chairs give this bill a high priority and strongly recommend to the House and Senate majority leaders that a vote on HB-5080 be taken by the full House and Senate.

Sincerely,

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