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

Re: **H.B. No.5080 AN ACT CONCERNING DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS**

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 Connecticut's Sunday hunting ban is simply an antiquated blue law that needs to be repealed.

Employment or school requires most hunters to work or study from Monday to Friday and this leaves only Saturday for hunting. This means hunters have only 16 days out of the year. Once you add inclement weather, family obligations and other family or work activities, this really leaves no available time for hunting. Allowing Sunday hunting will increase the opportunities we have to enjoy the outdoors and sport we love an additional 16 days.

We are all outdoors men/women and we eat what we harvest. The majority of us use the venison harvested to save in groceries and many of us share our bounty with family and friend in need. Lots of hunters also contribute to Hunt to feed.

Hunt to Feed is an organization that donates venison to the less fortunately. According to the CT Food Bank, more than 390,000 Connecticut residents are struggling today with hunger. Each deer donated by hunters can yield 200 meals.

SAFETY:

There is no recorded incident in Connecticut's history of a by stander or a non-hunter to ever, EVER being injured by a bow hunter.

FACTS:

Deer/Car collisions, Lyme disease occurrence, and property damage are all increasing. Hunting is the ONLY proven population management technique available for Deer.

Large populations of White-tailed deer have been identified as a primary threat to the health and diversity of our forested landscapes.

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.

Lowering the number of deer per square mile reduces the risk of Lyme Decease.

Few hunters will take extended hunting trips to a state that won't let them hunt on Sunday. Out-of-state hunters pay higher license fees benefitting DEEP and spend even more money than in-state hunters on gas, food, lodging and other incidentals that go along with a day's hunt.

The opposition

Humane society claims that recreational hunting is already allowed six days per week. Opening Sunday to hunting takes away the one day a week when nature lovers may enter the woods to hike, watch wildlife, camp, photograph, or horseback ride.

This is inaccurate because this bill covers only private property. Anyone hiking, watching wildlife, camping, photographing, or horseback riding in private property without the owner's consent is trespassing. Trespassing is illegal. Also, non hunters have 365 days a year when all those activities are allowed in public property.

According to humane society, if Sunday hunting is opened to bow-hunting on private land, arrows know no property boundaries and pose public safety hazards to anyone who is in the vicinity.

This is inaccurate due to the fact that most bow hunting takes place from a tree stand and all shots are taken on a downward angle never going more that 30-35 yards in a straight line. The risk of injuring someone is non-existing. If any bystander was within range of the arrow, the deer would flee and there would not be a shot taken.

According to the humane society, only 1% -- of people hunt in Connecticut.

It is not fair that 1% of the people pay 100% of license fees and can only enjoy the sport on 16 weekend days a year while of the other 99% don't pay any fees and get to enjoy it 365 days a year. According to the humane society, bird watchers outspend hunters 7.4 to 1. Taking into consideration that they outnumber hunters by 29 to 1 (their numbers not mine), each hunter actually outspend each bird watcher 4 to 1. It only takes 7 hunters to spend the same amount of money 29 bird watchers spend. More effort should be put in expanding the number of hunters.

Members of the Environmental Committee,

We are asking you to defend landowner rights by allowing landowners to determine who, where, when, and what activities should occur on our properties.

It is ridiculous that an activity that is SAFE and LEGAL 6 days of the week is illegal one day.

Sincerely, Mark R. Bell

Mark R. Bell