



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 2 February 2018

To: Senate Natural Resources and the Environment Committee

From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation

Re: Senate Bill 332

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to support Senate Bill 332 which would create the Georgia Youth Outdoors Passport Act, designed to promote Georgia's wealth of opportunities for recreational outdoor activities to Georgia's youth. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide, and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

Hunters and anglers play an important role in Georgia's societal and economic well being. Hunters provide a free ecological service to society by managing wildlife populations and provide more than \$892 million annually to Georgia's economy. Anything we can do to increase the number of hunters and anglers is good for Georgia's natural resources and wildlife and fisheries programs.

Safety is paramount to the future of hunting and this is especially true with regard to youth participation. Fortunately, research clearly shows hunting is safe. American Sports Data, Inc. conducted an extensive study in 2002 that examined more than 100 sports and activities. Twenty-eight activities, including cheerleading and aerobics, had higher injury rates than hunting. Hunting is safe and supervised youth are among the safest hunters. National statistics show that supervised youth hunters compose only a fraction of the hunting-related firearms incidents that occur annually.

Georgia is recruiting fewer young hunters and losing sportsmen's dollars. Increasing the number of youth hunters and anglers will combat these issues and Senate Bill 332 will help increase youth participation. Thank you for your commitment to Georgia's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation