



Re: SB 245 – An Act Prohibiting Hunting Along the Quinnipiac River in New Haven

Position: Oppose

Date: March 1, 2019

Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

We, the undersigned conservation organizations, collectively representing the interests of Connecticut's more than 350,000 hunters and anglers, are writing to you today to respectfully request that you do not support Senate Bill 245 (SB 245) – An Act Prohibiting Hunting Along the Quinnipiac River in New Haven. We ask that any decisions to close lands and waters of the state to hunting be subjected to the current open and transparent regulatory process of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and not subverted by legislative action.

SB 245 usurps the authority of, and undermines the existing processes in place at, the DEEP to determine when areas of the state are deemed inappropriate to remain open to hunting. This legislation not only reduces hunting opportunities in the state of Connecticut, at a time when hunting access is reported as the biggest barrier to recruiting new and lapsed hunters, but it also sets a dangerous precedent for how decisions impacting the regulation of hunting are made in the future.

America's fish and wildlife resources are some of the most abundant in the world as a result of science-based management by state fish and wildlife agencies such as the DEEP. The conservation

work done by these natural resource professionals is largely funded by hunters and anglers through the sale of licenses and stamps as well as through excise taxes on the sale of firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, fishing tackle, and motorboat fuel. This “user-pays, public-benefits” funding model is collectively known as the American System of Conservation Funding and it is the primary financial mechanism driving the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

As sportsmen and women, we spend more than \$750 million annually in Connecticut pursuing our outdoor passions. This spending supports over 10,700 jobs, and generates more than \$90 million in state and local taxes. Hunting is a highly regulated activity, with stringent laws specifying safe distances from occupied buildings that citizens can discharge or carry loaded firearms – all with safety in mind. Prior to and during last year’s temporary closure to hunting, we were unable to identify any safety-related incidents on the Quinnipiac River in the proposed affected area. Further, were such incidents to occur, the DEEP is already capable of dealing with them through their public and transparent regulatory process.

In closing, we respectfully ask that you do not support SB 245, a bill prohibiting hunting along the Quinnipiac River in New Haven. We urge the legislature to refer all fish and wildlife management decisions to the proven existing mechanism within the DEEP.

Sincerely,

Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
Connecticut Waterfowlers Association
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
National Deer Alliance
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Quality Deer Management Association
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society
Safari Club International
Sportsmen’s Alliance