



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 17 February 2020
To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: House Bill 4116

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to state our support for House Bill 4116 which would allow the use of leashed tracking dogs to help recover wounded big game animals. 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 50,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

The inability to locate a wounded game animal is devastating to a hunter. Irrespective of skill level, most hunters will at some point in their hunting career be unable to find an animal they have wounded. Rain, terrain and several other factors can play a role in these unfortunate situations, but regardless of cause, society does not like to see or hear about such events. Hunters and policy makers have a moral and ethical responsibility to do everything in their power to make sure every wounded animal is recovered.

Nearly 30 states in the East and Midwest have helped reduce the rate that wounded animals are not located by allowing the use of leashed tracking dogs. Trained dogs can be extremely effective at locating wounded or dead game, and since they are leashed they do not harass other wildlife. Tracking dogs locate specific animals by following blood and scent of the wounded individual rather than haphazardly searching for other animals. Their use has received overwhelming support in these states. This common-sense measure has also helped improve hunting's public image by providing ethical hunters with another tool to demonstrate their dedication to and appreciation of the wildlife resource.

In closing, we ask for your help in passing House Bill 4116. The bill is good for hunters, society and West Virginia's natural resources. Thank you for your consideration and please contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation