

Archery Trade Association ♦ American Woodcock Society ♦ Backcountry Hunters
and Anglers ♦ Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation ♦ Dallas Safari Club ♦ Delta
Waterfowl ♦ Mule Deer Foundation ♦ National Deer Alliance ♦ National Rifle
Association ♦ National Shooting Sports Foundation ♦ Pheasants Forever ♦ Quail
Forever ♦ Quality Deer Management Association ♦ Ruffed Grouse Society ♦ Safari
Club International ♦ Sportsmen's Alliance

August 21, 2020

John Frampton
President and CEO
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
1100 First Street, NE, Suite 825
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Sunday Hunting

Dear John,

As partner organizations committed to reducing barriers to participation in hunting to support hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts, we would like to thank you for your work across the country promoting active participation in hunting and the shooting sports. To further our shared R3 goals, we request that the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (Council) update the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan (Plan) to unequivocally express support for eliminating all restrictions on Sunday hunting, and that you give this request due consideration at your upcoming Board Meeting on August 25.

As you are well aware, access is a major limiting factor that hinders participation in hunting. Sunday hunting restrictions are temporal-access barriers, with no basis in wildlife management, that prevent youth and hardworking families from hunting one of the few days of the week, the only day in many cases, that they may be able to spend time together outdoors. Among many other positive benefits of Sunday hunting, including increased conservation funding, increased economic output and job creation and increased liberties for private property owners, abolishing Sunday hunting restrictions supports hunting participation, which fits within our collective goals to support R3 efforts.

We recognize that removing Sunday hunting restrictions is not an R3 panacea, but in states where Sunday hunting has been implemented our research indicates that lessening or eliminating these restrictions does in fact have a positive impact on hunting license sales, wherein the rate of decline is decreased in the years following Sunday hunting implementation.

Sunday hunting restrictions remain in only 10 states after years of work by the Sunday Hunting Coalition, state fish and wildlife agencies, and other partners, and we hope the Council will work with us to reduce these barriers to hunting participation by proactively supporting the repeal of Sunday hunting prohibitions. To that end, we urge the Council to update the Plan to:

- (1) Support the removal of all Sunday hunting restrictions; and
- (2) Specifically support Sunday hunting on public lands.

Considering the Council's strong relationships with state and fish wildlife agencies, we believe that the Council is well-positioned to help build support for increasing seven-day hunting opportunities, especially in states where the agency has regulatory authority for Sunday hunting on public lands (i.e. North Carolina and South Carolina). While we recognize that the Council does not currently have a formal position on Sunday hunting, we would like to note that the Council previously supported legislation to expand public land Sunday hunting opportunities in Maryland (SB 817 in 2018) and West Virginia (SB 451 in 2018).

Under the *Actionable Topics* section in the R3 Plan, the first priority strategy identified for *Increasing Access to Hunting Areas* is to "Conduct a situation analysis to identify public lands that do not provide adequate hunting opportunities and identify the barriers that prevent land managers from permitting adequate hunting opportunities." Removing Sunday hunting restrictions fits squarely within this priority.

In states with a private land v. public land dichotomy for Sunday hunting (i.e. North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia), the access parity is inequitable for the average hunter that relies on public land access. Purchasing or leasing private property for hunting is cost prohibitive for many families, and there is a growing awareness among sportsmen and women about the disparity between hunters with access to private lands and hunters that depend on access to public lands, lands that in many cases are purchased and/or managed with sportsmen-generated dollars through the American System of Conservation Funding.

We appreciate our partnership with the Council and look forward to continuing our work with you. As an organization dedicated to stemming the loss of hunters, please let us know how we can assist in the development of an updated Plan that recognizes the critical importance of removing Sunday hunting restrictions to supporting R3 efforts.

Sincerely,

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