



September 30, 2020

Jeremy Hurst
NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway, 5th Floor
Albany, New York 12233-4754

RE: Proposed potential future “holiday” deer hunt for New York’s Southern Zone

Dear Mr. Hurst:

On behalf of the National Deer Alliance (NDA) and the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), I am writing to comment on the recent proposal that would potentially create additional bowhunting and muzzleloader hunting opportunities from December 26 through January 1 in New York’s Southern Zone, colloquially named the “holiday” hunt. Our organizations represent nearly 80,000 deer hunters nationwide and nearly 2,000 deer hunters in New York state.

Generally, NDA and QDMA fully support the addition of new hunting opportunities that effectively maintain or aid in the management of a healthy and balanced wild deer herd. However, we do have some reservations on the realized increase in hunter opportunity presented by the proposed season, as well as other biological and sociological harvest-related issues.

The proposal includes four alternatives to the proposed “holiday” hunt. Of those alternatives, we believe that the option that shifts the dates of the existing late bow and muzzleloader season is the best alternative to the proposed “holiday” season. This alternative could offset most harvest-related concerns while maintaining hunter opportunity, and it also reduces hunter, deer processor, landowner, and Department staff fatigue associated with longer seasons. Moreover, while we believe that there may be even better options for expanding hunting opportunities in New York than the proposed “holiday” season, we understand that a “holiday” season could expand hunting opportunities for non-residents and students returning home, as well as hunters who have time off from work for the holidays.

To summarize, we applaud the Bureau of Wildlife’s attempt at increasing hunting opportunity in New York’s Southern Zone, and we support the Bureau of Wildlife’s inclusion of hunters and other stakeholders in the deer management process. While we support the “holiday” season proposal, we feel that some concerns of our members could be alleviated by opting to implement the fourth alternative listed in the proposal.

Sincerely,

Nick Pinizzotto
President and CEO