

BOARD OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES
POSITION SUPPORTING PUBLIC LANDOWNERS RECEIVING ABILITY
TO ALLOW SUNDAY HUNTING ON THEIR LANDS
OCTOBER 28, 2021

WHEREAS, the mission of the Board of Wildlife Resources includes connecting the public with wildlife, and hunting is a means of such a connection; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's past, present, and future hunters have been and will be major contributors to conservation efforts through license purchases, excise taxes on hunting equipment, and advocacy for sound stewardship of wildlife populations and habitats; and

WHEREAS, this contribution includes funding used to purchase and nurture wildlife populations, wildlife habitats, and access to wildlife-dependent recreation on public lands, including the Department of Wildlife Resources' Wildlife Management Areas; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation allowing hunting on Sundays on private lands in the Commonwealth, by and as allowed by the private landowner; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned legislation additionally allows the hunting of waterfowl on Sunday on all of the Commonwealth's lands and waters; and

WHEREAS, with only those limited exceptions as specified in Virginia Code § 29.1-521(a), hunting on Sundays on public lands remains prohibited in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, since the inception of hunting on Sundays on private lands in 2014, hunters with access to private land have enjoyed an additional day per week on which to hunt, while hunters limited to public lands have had no such opportunity; and

WHEREAS, nearly 40% of hunters pursue game species on public lands; and

WHEREAS, it is the Board's opinion that hunters of public lands should be treated equitably with hunters of private lands; and

WHEREAS, hunting on Sundays as it currently exists in the Commonwealth has not had a detrimental impact on wildlife populations or presented an unacceptable burden upon law enforcement resources, but has provided a valued additional opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity for hunters to use public lands on Sunday can contribute positively to the local economy; and

WHEREAS, it is the Board's opinion that public landowners, including the Department, are in the best position to determine whether and when hunting on the lands that they own is appropriate, to employ management specific to their lands to provide optimum recreational opportunities for all, and to take into consideration the desires of all parties and any considerations necessary to avoid user conflicts; and

WHEREAS, public landowners are afforded the ability allow hunting on Sundays in the vast majority of other states;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of Wildlife Resources supports further amendments to the Code of Virginia granting public landowners the ability to allow hunting on Sundays on their lands in the same manner as that currently afforded to private landowners.

ADOPTED this 28 day of October, 2021.