



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 162305 · Atlanta, Georgia 30321 · phone: 1-800-209-3337 · DEERASSOCIATION.com

Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

4 January, 2022

RE: Support for Outdoor Heritage Act and related conservation legislation

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA), I am writing to express our support for Massachusetts Senate Bill 547 (S.547), the Outdoor Heritage Act, and related conservation legislation currently being considered by the Committee. We are a non-profit conservation organization with the mission to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting. We represent 30,000 members in the United States and Canada, including hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

The NDA supports Massachusetts Senate Bill 547 (S.547), which contains a number of provisions to protect and bolster the Commonwealth's outdoor heritage. Specifically, S.547 allows the Director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, with the approval of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board, to authorize Sunday hunting for deer with archery equipment. Currently, less than a dozen states have significant restrictions in place regarding hunting on Sundays. There are no adverse biological effects of hunting on Sunday, and studies indicate that hunters will take advantage of Sunday hunting opportunities if available. The NDA sides with the clear data that shows Sunday hunting will help provide economic benefit to rural communities, help with hunter recruitment and retention, and provide hunters more opportunity to help state agencies reach their harvest objectives. The NDA supports repeal of Sunday hunting prohibitions where applicable, including in Massachusetts.

Next, S.547 removes the prohibition on the use of crossbows for hunting. While the NDA is more interested in managing deer and habitat appropriately and protecting our hunting heritage than debating use of specific weapons, we do support the inclusion of crossbows as a legal method of take for deer and other species within appropriate seasons. We especially support the use of crossbows if their use positively impacts a deer management program and helps recruit and retain more hunters.

Finally, S.547 states that citizens of the Commonwealth shall have the right to harvest fish and wildlife free from harassment subject to rules and regulations established to maintain sustainable and healthy populations of such natural resources. The bill also establishes increased penalties for verbal or physical harassment of hunters, the destruction or vandalism of hunting or fishing equipment, and for bodily harm caused by such destruction or vandalism.

The NDA supports S.547 and related conservation legislation that's currently before the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. We appreciate the Committee's consideration of important conservation measures that will benefit all of the Commonwealth's residents, and we encourage the Committee's affirmative vote on these provisions.

Sincerely,

Torin Miller
Director of Policy