



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

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Rep. Bill Kinkade, Chairman
House Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Committee
Room: 112-C
P. O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215

27 January, 2023

RE: Support for Mississippi House Bill 1284 – Commission Expansion

Dear Chairman Kinkade:

On behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA), I am writing to provide our comments in support of Mississippi House Bill 1284 (HB 1284) and respectfully ask that you bring the bill up in the House Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Committee (Committee) before the upcoming deadline. We are a national non-profit conservation organization with the mission to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting. We represent 30,000 members nationwide, including hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

Introduced by Rep. Ladner, HB 1284 would expand the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (Commission) to nine members, institutes qualification requirements for four of the nine members and requires the Commission to manage the state's wildlife and fisheries resources in accordance with sound scientific principles, and in collaboration with the agency staff of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP).

The NDA's mission – the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat, and hunting – relies on management decisions founded in sound scientific principles. Based on recent actions and proposals by the Commission, the NDA has concerns about the guiding influences in the Commission's decisions. Expansion of the Commission to include additional members qualified in the wildlife sciences will result in better management decisions for the state's wildlife – a resource belonging to the people of Mississippi. Similarly, a statutory mandate that the Commission manage the state's wildlife and fisheries resources in accordance with sound scientific principles strengthens the presence of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation in Mississippi. We believe HB 1284 is necessary to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting in the state, and we ask respectfully ask that you elevate the bill to the full Committee for consideration.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Mississippi Legislature on issues surrounding deer, wildlife habitat and hunting, and welcome any questions you may have regarding our position on this or similar bills.

Sincerely,

Torin Miller
Senior Director of Policy