



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

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Delaware General Assembly
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

8 January, 2024

RE: Support for Expanded Sunday Hunting in Delaware, including HB 271

Dear Members of the Delaware General Assembly:

On behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA), I am writing to provide our comments in support of expanded Sunday hunting in Delaware, including our support of Delaware House Bill 271 (HB 271). We are a national non-profit conservation organization with the mission to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting. We represent over 100,000 members nationwide, and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

The National Deer Association (NDA) supports repeal of Sunday hunting prohibitions nationwide. 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, retention and reactivation (R3), and provide hunters more opportunity to help state agencies reach their harvest objectives. Additionally, a recent National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) study found that Sunday hunting could create over 225 new jobs and pump \$5.4 million into Delaware's economy. This includes impacts to traditional outdoor industries and other businesses, such as restaurants, gas stations and hotels.

In 2016, the Delaware legislature eliminated the prohibition for hunting deer (only) on Sundays, but Colonial-era Sunday hunting prohibitions persist for waterfowl, other migratory gamebirds, and other game animals. As many Delaware hunters work nontraditional schedules, participate in youth sports and other scholastic activities, or are otherwise engaged Monday through Saturday, removing the prohibitions on Sunday hunting represents an excellent opportunity to equitably accommodate all hunters who wish to partake in Delaware hunting—especially in an era when hunting populations have been declining. HB 271 removes these prohibitions and gives full regulatory authority for Sunday hunting of gamebirds to the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) Division of Fish and Wildlife.

For the reasons mentioned above, NDA respectfully asks you to remove the prohibitions on hunting gamebirds in Delaware on Sundays. In doing so, Delaware will join 42 other states that allow bird hunting on Sundays, and the Division of Fish and Wildlife will have the authority to regulate Sunday gamebird hunting. Removal of some remaining Sunday hunting restrictions will boost hunter engagement, agency budgets and local economies.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have, or for more information, regarding our position on this or similar issues or legislation.

Sincerely,

Torin Miller
Senior Director of Policy