



Plymouth County League of Sportsmen

Paul Johnson, President

3 Laurie Lane, Carver, MA 02330-1398

September 18, 2018

Senate Chairman Ann M Gobi
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
24 Beacon Street
Room 513
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Gobi,

The Plymouth County League of Sportsmen represents 17 clubs and over 14,000 sportsmen and sportswomen of Plymouth County and surrounding areas. On behalf of them thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the legislation before you.

You have before you 22 pieces of legislation. It's a daunting task for volunteer leaders in the sporting community to effectively represent their constituents on 22 bills with 11 days' notice. We strive to provide quality input on complex issues. As volunteers, we have a fraction of the time available to full time advocates and most of us work full time jobs.

S.428 We support this legislation. Data on problem wildlife control must be provided to the Division of Fish and Wildlife if we expect them to discharge their mission to manage wildlife for the benefit of present and future generations. The type of data required needs to be at the discretion of those charged with managing the resources.

S.429 We enthusiastically support changes to general laws which remove statutory definitions of hunting implements and delegates the authority to promulgate regulations to the Director of Fish and Wildlife. These changes make the process of revision updating and correction easier.

S.430 We support changes which allow hunting of coyotes using artificial lights but in the interest of future changes we prefer the authority for regulating the use of artificial lights be delegated to the director of Fisheries and Wildlife. This change will place the responsibility where the expertise lies and will simplify the process of future update and correction.

S.431 We support this bill but suggest that the following words be deleted from lines 5 & 6 "in the following counties; Worcester, Berkshire, Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin" There is no need to restrict the application of discretion by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

S.432 We support the changes which allow the use of shotguns while bear hunting. We prefer the authority for regulating the use of implements used for hunting be delegated to the director of Fisheries and Wildlife. This change will place the responsibility where the expertise lies and will simplify the process of future update and correction.

S.433 While we support and prefer removing the prohibition on Sunday hunting altogether we believe that short of a complete reversal of the prohibition against Sunday hunting S.433 is the best roadmap to



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moving the Commonwealth in line with the laws of the rest of the nation. Massachusetts stands as one of just 3 States that completely ban hunting on Sundays.

Restrictions on Sunday hunting treat hunters as second-class citizens and tacitly endorse the view that there is something wrong with hunting. This ignores the fact that hunting is part of America's heritage. Hunters contribute billions of dollars to wildlife and conservation programs, through license fees, land stamps and Pitman Robertson taxes paid by sportsmen.

S.433 will allow the Director and his agency to ease the transition in the most responsible and least disruptive manner. The director can begin this conversation outside the politically charged atmosphere of Beacon Hill. One could imagine the Director might begin by allowing Sunday hunting on wildlife management areas that were purchased and maintained, not with tax dollars but with money contributed by sportsmen. The Director and his staff will have a maximum amount of flexibility to create a solution that will work for everyone. S.433 will create a logical framework for a well-planned transition. Hunting whitetail deer with bows on Sunday will give Mass Wildlife more flexibility to manage deer populations, including the ability to increase hunting in areas that have unsustainably high game populations. The director needs new tools to effectively manage the states growing deer herd.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife has been implementing new programs aimed at retaining existing hunters. These programs have the strong support of the sporting community. As legislators, you need to be aware that the most commonly cited reason people stop hunting is a lack of opportunity. Most people work a standard shift Monday through Friday. Sunday hunting restrictions cut their opportunity to hunt in half. I find it ironic that our state is willing to spend money to create hunter retention programs but won't address the root cause of why people are leaving the sport.

Another initiative that was implemented by the Division of Fish and Wildlife a decade ago is aimed at new hunter recruitment. These programs are the best programs implemented in the field of Wildlife management in the history of the Commonwealth. I am the youth hunt chairman and have managed the youth hunt programs at the Carver Sportsmen's Club since 2004. Many of our young adult hunters have a wide variety of entertainment options and most are involved in some form of extracurricular activities on Saturdays. Our program would be enhanced if these young people had more opportunity to hunt with their parents on Sundays. Think for a minute of all the positive interactions that you can support between parents and their young adult children by removing the antiquated restrictions that stand in the way of a parent spending time with his or her teenage children on a Sunday hunt.

We need these programs. Science tells us we must remove the obstacles that deny people opportunity to hunt. If recruitment and retention programs fail the funding for management and land acquisition will grind to a halt. Scientific management demands that we pay attention to long term trends and react before the hunter is the endangered species and society finds itself without the revenues necessary to sustain wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation programs.

The argument that private landowners will close their lands if Sunday hunting is allowed is often cited by opponents of Sunday hunting. Sunday hunting increases the options of landowners and enhances their property rights. Any landowner who wants to restrict the use of their property on Sundays may do so. Nothing in this legislation forces them to open their land on Sunday. Landowner rights are enhanced not reduced by S.433.



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Repealing blue laws prohibiting hunting on Sundays will increase license sales and will have a positive impact on the state's economy. Sunday hunting is, like all the other blue law prohibitions, an obstacle to lawful commerce and an impediment to our economy.

At the end of the transition you can expect the following tangible results

	JOBS	WAGES	OUTPUT
Direct	301	\$7,586,905	\$20,398,572
INDIRECT	77	\$3,908,138	\$11,318,308
INDUCED	149	\$6,431,677	\$19,414,951
TOTAL	527	\$17,926,719	\$51,131,832

(<http://sundayhunting.org/SundayHunting/states/Massachusetts.cfm>)

The Plymouth County League of Sportsmen reminds you that the sportsmen and women of the Commonwealth are the backbone of conservation efforts in the Commonwealth. We are positive role models in the community, we provide the volunteer manpower for hunter education, hunter recruitment and retention programs of the Commonwealth, we train and FID and LTC applicants for the State Police courses. S.433 is not a complete victory for sportsmen but it does break the log jam of opposition to Sunday hunting. If 47 other states allow Sunday Hunting why not Massachusetts? If not now when? If you can't support S.433 then what can you support? If citizens can smoke a joint in Massachusetts on Sunday, buy alcohol on Sunday and gamble on Sunday then why can't they hunt on Sunday on lands purchased and maintained with our money.

S.433 is about conservation funding, wildlife management and economics. It's about finding solutions and treating sportsmen equally under the law. We offer s.433 as a compromise. If you oppose Sunday hunting across the board we are willing to work with you and the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife on solutions that will work. Who among the opposition is willing to set aside their opposition and find common ground? Sunday hunting works in 47 other states and it will work here if we work together.

S.435 We support the changes to hunting setbacks which allow hunting with bows from tree stands from 500 feet to 250 feet. These changes will open additional areas to hunting without safety concerns.

S.437 We support the changes represented by the outdoor heritage act. Rather than testify on the specifics The Plymouth County League of Sportsmen defers to the representative of Gun Owners Action League who credibly and professionally represent the interests of sportsmen and women of the Commonwealth on this matter.

S.445 As previously stated we support repealing the prohibition on Sunday hunting.

S.446 We support giving the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife the authority to promulgate rules and regulations pertaining to shotgun cartridges for hunting. This change will place the responsibility where the expertise lies and will simplify the process of future update and correction.



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S.447 We support changes which allow the use of cross bows subject to rules promulgated by the director of fisheries and wildlife.

S.415 We support bow hunting in Wampatuck State Park subject to regulations by the commissioner of the department of conservation and recreation.

S.420 We support changes to expand the powers of the director of fisheries and wildlife to be exercised Monday through Sunday.

S.421 We support repeal of Section 80A of Chapter 131 regulation of implements of trapping should be under the control of the director of fisheries and wildlife.

H.442 We support the changes in section 2 which require problem animal control data reporting to the director of fisheries and wildlife.

H.453 We support giving the director of fisheries and wildlife the authority to promulgate rules and regulations pertaining to the possession of shotgun ammunition for hunting. This change will place the responsibility where the expertise lies and will simplify the process of future update and correction.

H.456 We support changes to implement "Best Management Practices"

H.469 While we support and prefer removing the prohibition on Sunday hunting altogether we support changes allowing Sunday bow hunting of any bird or mammal using bow and arrow.

H470 We support changes to implement "Best Management Practices"

S.415 We support bow hunting in Wampatuck State Park subject to regulations by the commissioner of the

H.473 We support changes which allow the hunting of coyotes with artificial lights but prefer the authority to regulate hunting implements be under rules and regulations promulgated by the director of fisheries and wildlife.

Sincerely,

Paul Johnson