

Presented by: Carl Roe

Chairman Evans, Chairman Staback, and members of the House Game and Fisheries Committee; as always it is great pleasure to appear before you to address issues of interest to our hunters and the general public.

At the June 28, 2011 Pennsylvania Game Commission Meeting of the Board of Commissioners, the Board voted to pass the following resolution;

Sunday Hunting Resolution by the Board of Commissioners, June 28th, 2011. The Board of Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission declares its support for a repeal of prohibitions on Sunday hunting by the amending of Title 34 (Game), of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes in Hunting and Trapping.

Whereas, Pennsylvania has experienced consistent declines in hunting participation by both resident and non-resident hunters over the past several decades, with both the number of licenses sold and revenues generated experiencing steady declines; and

Whereas, youth participation is vital to maintaining the long-standing tradition of hunting in Pennsylvania. We can effectively double the number of hunting days for youths during the school year by offering Sunday hunting; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting is an effective means of recruiting new hunters and retaining current hunters by increasing the value of the hunting license through offering additional opportunities to spend time in the field; and

Whereas, many Pennsylvania residents seek hunting opportunities and hunting leases in neighboring states that offer Sunday hunting. Sunday hunting will keep Pennsylvania hunters in Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania has a longstanding tradition of hunting camps and clubs. Sunday hunting will effectively double the number of hunting days for camp owners and club members; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to generate a substantial increase in out-of-state license sales and the accompanying revenue for the Pennsylvania Game Commission; and

Whereas, hunting license sales and their associated federal matching funds are the primary revenue source for the Pennsylvania Game Commission in carrying out its mission, including maintaining 1.5 million acres of state game lands and acquisition of additional public lands, research and management of wildlife and providing information and education to the public; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting will provide substantial economic benefits to rural areas and businesses by increasing money spent by hunters on lodging, food, gas and other incidental items; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to generate \$629 million in additional spending and create 5,300 new jobs, resulting in \$18 million in additional sales and income tax; and

Whereas, the mission of the Pennsylvania Game Commission is to manage wildlife and its habitat for current and future generations; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting, which is currently permitted to control a growing population of coyotes, will provide the biologists of the Pennsylvania Game Commission a new tool to manage wildlife populations; and

Whereas, the 43 states that currently permit Sunday hunting, have not experienced any discernable impact on the health or vibrancy of game populations; and

Whereas, the Board of Commissioners recognizes, the authority to permit Sunday hunting lies entirely with the General Assembly of Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, if the General Assembly repeals the restrictions on Sunday hunting, thus giving the authority to regulate Sunday hunting to the Board of Commissioners, the Board recognizes the many stakeholder groups any actions on Sunday hunting will affect and will endeavor to engage these stakeholders before passing any new regulations in regard to Sunday hunting.

Now, therefore, we, the Board of Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, do hereby urge the General Assembly of Pennsylvania to repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Board passed this resolution with a vote of 4 to 3 with one abstention. The one abstention was against the process not the issue and that Commissioner has provided you with written testimony in a previous hearing.

I would also like to add there is much speculating on the impact of Sunday hunting on season and bag limits. Once given the authority to add the Sunday Hunting opportunity, the agency will address the Sunday hunting possibilities. We monitor the effect of additional opportunity on game populations and the possible impacts. We have established harvest data and models to monitor any changes in harvest.

As it is with other changes to season and bag limits, it would be my opinion that there would be a very conservative approach to adding Sunday hunting, We will analyze the information and make future recommendations based on the estimated harvest data. It would only be speculation on our behalf to prejudge the impact on any season at this time.

I want to reiterate that the Board passed a resolution supporting the repeal of the prohibition on Sunday hunting in the Commonwealth. As with other issues such as the Board setting hunting licenses fees, we would welcome any additional authority that Assembly would like to give us.

I would be glad to answer any of your questions.