

Connecticut



Waterfowling
Association

Dear Representatives on the Legislature's Planning and Development Committee:

I am writing you on behalf of the Connecticut Waterfowling Association (CWA) a 52-year-old Connecticut conservation group focused on wetland conservation and the preservation of the tradition of waterfowl hunting. The CWA urges you to oppose H.B. 5272, *An Act Permitting Municipal Regulation of Trapping and Hunting*, the purpose of which is to allow local bans on the hunting and trapping of wildlife.

The Legislature has rightfully placed the authority for the management of wildlife, including hunting and trapping, within the jurisdiction of the DEEP as described in CGS 26-3. The DEEP has done an outstanding job of comprehensively managing the state's biodiversity and controlling some wildlife populations that can be a threat to public health and safety.

As a veteran of a 30-year career in the DEP (now DEEP) Wildlife Division, I have seen legislation similar to H. B. 5272 proposed before. None of those bills were ever passed thanks to the common sense and vision of the Legislature. A system whereby municipalities have the authority to prohibit hunting and trapping in their towns cannot possibly work to maintain state-wide professional, responsible wildlife management.

These bills typically arise from anti-hunting sentiment and opposition to the noise associated with hunting. Hunting and trapping are highly regulated, safe activities and essential to responsible wildlife conservation and public health and safety. A process whereby municipalities could prohibit hunting and trapping is untenable.

Consider migratory birds like ducks and geese. These species are managed under Federal authority that cannot be usurped by a state or municipality. Much of the hunting activity for ducks occurs in tidal waters below mean high tide, which is public trust property that is not owned and cannot be regulated by the riparian municipality.

Another example of problems likely to arise if hunting were prohibited in some municipalities, would be issues with increasing populations of white-tailed deer. The DEEP has done an excellent job of reducing or controlling the rates of growth of over-abundant deer populations in some parts of Connecticut through innovative harvest strategies. If deer hunting was no longer allowed in such areas, deer populations would experience rapid growth. This would increase deer-vehicle collisions and associated human injury and deaths, as well as increased rates of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases in humans and pets.

These are just a few examples of the multitude of problems that would arise if H.B. 5272 were to be enacted.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Chasko
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Certified Wildlife Biologist
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