



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Stacey Ober, J.D.
Government Relations
Regional Manager
New England

February 6, 2024

The Honorable David A. Bennett
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: American Kennel Club Requests Amendment to H. 7294, Field Trials and Shooting Preserves - Captive Hunting Prohibited

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the Committee:

The American Kennel Club writes to you today on behalf of the many responsible dog owners in Rhode Island with a requested amendment to avoid an unintended consequence of H. 7294, as drafted, which is intended to ban captive hunting.

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club (AKC) is a recognized and trusted expert in canine health, breeding, and training, and in promoting responsible dog ownership. We are dedicated to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all dogs and to preserving each unique breed. We represent over 5,000 dog clubs nationally, including 10 clubs in Rhode Island. In 2021, AKC licensed and sanctioned [57 events in the state of Rhode Island](#), in which more than 10,000 dogs participated. Surveys estimate that exhibitors spend \$863 per show weekend, many of whom travel into Rhode Island to participate.

AKC encourages and strongly supports the interaction and mutual enjoyment of owners and dogs in sporting activities such as hunting and field trials; in working circumstances such as herding, tracking, and pulling; and in competition events such as dog shows, obedience trials, agility trials, and other performance events and tests. Dating back to the late 1800s, the sport of beagling is a long-time tradition in the Northeast and was one of the first field trials or “competitions” held by AKC (1888).

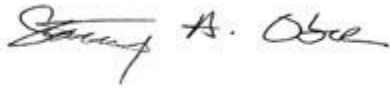
The stated purpose of H. 7294 is to prohibit captive hunting for domestic or wild animals. As introduced, H. 7294 might also prohibit beagle club members’ activities when training their dogs and conducting AKC-licensed field trials. There are two active beagle clubs in Rhode Island.

Respectfully, we have discussed our concern with Michael Wood, Chair, New England Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, and agree that the following amendment would resolve this issue. Kindly consider making it clear that these activities would not be considered “captive hunting” and prohibited by amending subsection (d) as follows:

*(d) The term captive hunting shall not apply to the release of upland game birds for hunting whether on public property or on private property properly licensed by the department as a shooting preserve, **or to field trials conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Title and property licensed by the department.***

Thank you for your consideration. If I can be of assistance to the committee, kindly contact me. I can be reached at (919) 816-3348 or Stacey.Ober@akc.org.

Sincerely,



Stacey Ober, JD
Regional Manager, New England
AKC Government Relations

Cc: Representative Scott Slater, Sponsor H. 7294
Michael Wood, Chair, New England Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
John Gibble, Legislative Chair, Northeast Beagle Gundog Federation