



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

March 20, 2025

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

RE: H 5606 An Act Relating to Fish and Wildlife – Hunting and Hunting Safety – Wildlife Killing Contest

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 5606, which would prohibit wildlife killing contests. DEM is neutral on this legislation but suggests that adoption of such a prohibition may be better suited for the regulatory process.

H 5606 would prohibit any person, organization, or business from organizing, sponsoring, promoting, conducting, or participating in “wildlife killing contests.” The bill defines that term as “a contest, organized competition, tournament, or derby that has as its objective the taking or hunting of any furbearers...on state or private land, for cash, prizes, or other inducement.” The bill further exempts certain types of activities, such as field trials permitted by DEM and lawful hunting or trapping activities to the extent they do not occur during a contest, organized competition, or derby, from the bill’s prohibitions. DEM is unaware of any such contest, organized competition, or derby which currently occurs in Rhode Island, but we acknowledge that there is no prohibition in statute or regulation that would bar the practice.

Each year, the DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife conducts an extensive stakeholder outreach process to develop hunting and trapping regulations to take effect the following year. This outreach includes a public workshop in addition to the formal public comment process required by the Administrative Procedures Act. The process allows interested stakeholders the ability to share ideas and feedback with DEM’s experienced team of wildlife biologists for potential inclusion in these regulations. In general, DEM prefers that subject matter such as the prohibitions proposed by this legislation be considered through that process to ensure that the wide range of stakeholders with an interest in hunting-related topics have a chance to also share

their feedback. However, we note that we have not identified any specific flaws with the language proposed in this legislation and are not taking a position on the legislation.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of Legislative Affairs, at ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

cc: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
The Honorable Rebecca Kislak
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director