



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 22 February 2019
To: Senate Natural Resources Committee
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: Senate Bills 577 and 586

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to oppose Senate Bills 577 and 586 which would impact white-tailed deer hunting seasons and bag limits. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide, and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for managing the wildlife resources in the state, and this includes administering the deer management program. An important component of the highly successful North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is that wildlife is held in trust by each state for its citizens to enjoy. Sportsmen and women are becoming increasingly engaged in deer management programs, and this is important as white-tailed deer are the most popular big game animal in the United States. Successful deer management requires a scientific approach that is transparent to the public and supported by hunters. It is important for state wildlife agencies to use scientifically sound variables that are measurable and well defined by a public input process.

We are aware of the current push to reduce the antlered buck bag limit, and we are not opposed to that. DNR staff have stated reducing the buck bag limit would have minimal impact on the actual buck harvest. Given this fact, if the upcoming Southwick and Associates hunter survey shows the reduction is supported by the majority of hunters then we will encourage the DNR to move forward with such a proposal to reduce the buck bag limit. However, we prefer that change occurs at the DNR rather than the legislative level.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to West Virginia's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation