



Empire State Forest Products Association

The people behind New York's healthy forests and quality wood products

www.esfpa.org

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Memorandum of Support

A 783/S 2630

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Honorable Rachel May
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March 27, 2023

Dear Assemblywoman Hunter and Senator May:

The Empire State Forest Products Association supports **A. 783/S. 2630**, a bill that addresses a critical impact on forest regeneration in New York State through wildlife management permitting and practices aimed at nuisance wildlife. These bills would establish an Urban Deer Management Pilot Program in the Syracuse metropolitan area where deer have become a significant nuisance.

The Empire State Forest Products Association (ESFPA) represents more than 350 member businesses, industries and landowners engaged in forest resource production and stewardship of New York's 19 million acres of forest. In total, \$22.8 billion dollars in annual industry production and nearly 100,000 jobs are attributable to operations of various industries within the forest related sectors. There are more than 200,000 private forest landowners who also depend on sound forest and timber management and production to help them keep their forests as forests.

This legislation would establish a pilot program for wildlife damage management, minimum qualifications for certified nuisance wildlife specialists and procedures for issuing and using permits for wildlife damage management where such management is necessary for minimize risks to human health and safety on roadways and to relieve damage to natural resources, property, and agriculture.

There is a growing body of evidence and research demonstrating concern over the status of forest regeneration in New York State. Regeneration is in the poorest condition in the southeast, Central New York and Southern Tier portions of State. While there are a number of factors that could be influencing forest regeneration, in these regions in

particular a number of studies and reviews have shown that deer herbivory is the leading cause of poor regeneration.

While there are limitations to our current knowledge, we have good reason to be concerned that inadequate regeneration is likely to be a problem for forests in many areas of the State, particularly for timber species. If we wish to sustainably maintain forest cover, diversity, and function, we should take action now to improve our understanding of this important issue and incorporate new information into resource management decisions.

Restricting permitted deer damage methods impacts the ability of municipalities, neighborhoods, communities, parks, and land managers to manage damage caused by certain wildlife species and a change to the law will avoid this impact. **A. 783/S. 2630** would allow the use of certain culling activities that provide a safe, humane, and effective means to reducing deer populations in localized areas. This bill establishes clear standards for wildlife damage management to ensure safe and effective practices that are considerate of the environment, property damage mitigation, and human health and safety. The pilot program would run for three years and be evaluated for retention if demonstrated to be safe and effective management of deer in the Syracuse area.

Based on the aforementioned reasons, ESFPA supports the intent of this legislation and we look forward to working with both the Assembly and the Senate on the eventual passage of this legislation which can be forwarded to the Governor for signing.

cc: Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Members
Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Members

For Further Information Contact:

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