



**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

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February 6, 2024

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

**RE: H 7294 – An Act Relating to Fish and Wildlife – Field Trials and Shooting Preserves – Captive Hunting Prohibited**

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 7294, which would prohibit the importation of any animal into the state for purposes of captive hunting. DEM supports this legislation with one technical amendment for your consideration.

Importation of animals from outside the state into Rhode Island for hunting purposes poses several threats to people and wildlife. The imported animals, particularly cervids such as deer or elk, may carry destructive diseases such as chronic wasting disease that pose a threat to Rhode Island's native wildlife. Furthermore, some animals that could be imported to be hunted, such as pigs, are destructive to property and difficult to eradicate if they were to escape the premises where the hunting occurs. Finally, DEM believes that the practice of captive hunting as described in the legislation is at odds with hunting ethics such as the concept of fair chase.

DEM proposes the following amendment to the legislation to maintain consistent language across related statutes:

(d) The term captive hunting shall not apply to the release of ~~upland~~ domestic game birds for hunting whether on public property or on private property properly licensed by the department of environmental management as a shooting preserve.

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](mailto:ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov) you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terrence Gray". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Terrence Gray, P.E.  
Director

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