



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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March 26, 2021

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

RE: H 6346 An Act Relating to Fish and Wildlife – Hunting and Hunting Safety

Dear Chairman Bennett:

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 6346, which amends current law to require that any injury to a human being resulting from firearms, archery, or crossbows while hunting or trapping be reported to DEM by the individual or responding authority as soon as practical. DEM supports this legislation.

State law currently requires that any individual sustaining an injury from a firearm while hunting make a report to DEM within 72 hours unless that individual is physically incapable of making the report, in which case the individual is required to designate another individual to inform DEM. This requirement was instituted prior to the widespread adoption of mobile technology. The 72-hour timeframe for filing a report unfortunately means that evidence vital to DEM's investigation of the incident may have washed away or otherwise become unavailable. In addition, hunting-related injuries are not limited strictly to firearms; archery and crossbows are becoming popular methods of hunting, but the current statute doesn't require incidents involving these weapons to be reported to DEM.

To address these issues, the legislation proposes a requirement that the responding authority notify DEM of the incident immediately or as soon as practical. Furthermore, the legislation would expand the requirement for reporting injuries to DEM to include hunting-related injuries involving archery and crossbows. DEM believes that these amendments provide individuals with options for meeting their obligations under the law while ensuring that incidents are reported in a timely fashion to aid in investigations of hunting-related injuries.

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 Dean Hoxsie, Chief of DEM Law

Enforcement, at dean.hoxsie@dem.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Coit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a stylized "C".

Janet Coit
Director

CC: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources