

March 30, 2018

To: Members of the NH Fish and Game Commission

From: _____

Subject: Support For A Limited Antlerless Permit System For Northern NH

Please accept this letter as my personal endorsement supporting of a limited antlerless permit system for the northern third of our great State of New Hampshire. This proposed antlerless permit system would replace the current system of allocating either-sex days for rifle and muzzleloader seasons, specific to each Wildlife Management Unit (WMU). It would not be an additional tag.

This endorsement is generic in principle in that I am not bound to an individual proposal, but more to a general concept. However, I do support the general framework as outlined by the AVFGA. My underlying issue of concern is that the current system does not effectively allow for the harvest of antlerless deer in WMUs where winter mortality can quickly alter the age structure and overall number of local deer populations. The current strategy of allocating either sex days is slow to react to these changes, and in the name of caution the Wildlife Division seldom recommends either sex days in the northern part of the State. And when it is done, it has generally been a single day that falls midweek, resulting in little additional opportunity for local residents. I agree with AVFGA that this methodology harmful in the recruitment and retention of inexperienced hunters.

It should be the goal of the NHFG to advocate for advanced opportunities for sportsmen whenever there is no negative biological impact. I believe the creation of an antlerless deer permit system in the northern third of the State is in the best interests of advancing this goal. I believe that the NHFG Dept., with the information already available, should be able to conservatively estimate the number of antlerless deer that could be harvested within each WMU, giving due consideration to the carrying capacity of the habitat and the sex ratio of the population.

For example, if a WMU with marginal habitat is deemed to be able to support an antlerless harvest of 6 antlerless deer, and knowing that hunter success is statistically likely to be less than 25%, 20 antlerless permits could be allocated for that WMU with no threat of overharvest. Being marginal in quality, with many other options available, who but the local residents would apply? And if outsiders did, so be it. But what I envision is 20 enthusiastic local hunters who can't wait to get out of school or work so that they get in the woods. And if after a couple of years the number harvested is above or below the target goal, the number of permits can be changed. I view this as a far more scientific manner to regulate our doe harvest than using the current method.

I see no negatives by instituting this system. Rather than sporadically and randomly allocating either sex days, I would rather see these surplus antlerless deer available throughout the entire season to those lucky enough to have won an antlerless deer tag. If done properly, the advantages of a permit system are two-fold. Scientifically, it is better to have a limited harvest than no harvest, for this is where

the most valuable data is obtained. Recreationally, for those who are still in school, having an antlerless permit would allow for a much more opportunity, specifically when at the age that there are so many distractions. For the older population who hunt, but in shorter stints, a permit would allow them to hunt on their schedule. The same can be said for the majority of us who work.

In closing, with regards to any costs associated with the implementation of a permit system, I would be willing to pay a reasonable application fee to cover costs. I foresee little opposition to imposing an application fee to cover administrative costs to make this proposal a reality.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Signed _____

Address: _____
