

Date: September 19, 2016

Subject: Deer Management – Real Estate

To: State Representatives

From: Douglas Sellers  
Owner/Broker  
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Reference: (a) Public Hearing of the House State Government Committee

**DRAMATIC EFFECTS ON CABINS, HUNTERS AND LOCAL ECONOMY DUE TO FAILED DEER HERD MANAGEMENT**

I am a real estate broker in Mifflin County. One of my specialties is listing and selling cabins on DCNR leased sites. This activity is a vital part of my living. The market has changed due to the lack of deer. Days on market for cabins are much longer per my records and our MLS. Prices are far below those of 5 to 10 years ago. As part of my business promotion I frequently stop by cabins I sold to see how the guys made out hunting. I now find those cabins dark and unoccupied. Cabins that typically had guys there for the first week of deer season now are empty after the first day. One of the larger cabins in our area, the Camp Crissman in Havice Valley, sleeps over 2 dozen and is normally full the whole first week and the last few days of the season. This year it was dark after 2 days. They killed a few deer, found very little deer sign, left camp early. About a dozen of the regulars did not buy licenses or come to camp at all. They own approx. 300 acres surrounded by Bald Eagle State Forest. Even on private ground in the mountains there were not enough deer to hold their interest. Calls from cabin owners requesting to sell have increased these past few years.

With the dark and empty cabins, the Siglerville Country Store had a bad hunting season in 2013.

They rely on a good boost to finish the year with decent sales. That didn't happen. With empty cabins, licenses were not sold, ammunition was not sold, distributors were not patronized, local bars and restaurants were not frequented, sporting goods stores

had poor sales figures, less gasoline, propane and firewood sold. The fact is that when hunters are enjoying their time at camp, which includes at least seeing deer, they spend money in the local area as well as their home towns. Nearly all businesses are affected negatively. Every aspect of our local economy suffers from failed deer management.

Bear season for me doubles as deer scouting time. With snow on the ground, I tramped at least 3 miles, drove around about 20 miles. I cut ONE deer track in all of my travels which included some deep woods and thick areas. I consider myself not only an avid deer hunter but a skilled one. I nearly always harvest a deer every year. I will not hunt from my cabin in the mountains this year or until the deer numbers justify my time. I am 61 years old and have been active in this area all my life. I know Mifflin County well; have hunted many parts of this county for years. I know where the deer were and where they are no longer. Deer sightings have been less and less for at least the last 10 years. Areas hunted include wooded areas where there is sufficient browse and near fields where there are crops and grasses, so available food is not the issue everywhere. Overhunting and predation can be added to failed management. A larger deer herd will equate to a healthier economy in this and other areas.

Respectfully submitted,  
Doug Sellers  
Owner-Broker  
SELLERS REAL ESTATE