



## **Limited Sunday Hunting**

### **House Bill No. 2106**

House Game and Fisheries Committee

Chair Anita Kulik and Committee members.

I am here to represent the Pennsylvania Equine Council (PEC). We are a statewide organization preserving the safety, education, and recreation of the equine community in Pennsylvania. The equine community is over a \$10 billion industry in Pennsylvania and is a large contributor to PA's economics. Equine is one of the largest segments of large animal agriculture in the state with Agriculture being the #1 industry. Many farmers depend on the horse industry to keep their hay and grain fields in production. Many equestrian owner's trail ride close to home or travel with their horses to ride and camp in PA's well-known forest trail systems. In the early 2000's Pennsylvania Equine Council worked with the PGC to reestablish access to trails that had been used for many years. It took over three years to work the PGC standard operating procedures, have it accepted by the PGC Regions and then have it approved by PA's Attorney General. Unlimited Sunday hunting will only take our trail use away due to safety and assist in the decline of equestrian ownership and affecting the equestrian economic impact in PA. Trail users need to feel safe for at least one day a week, if not all the time during hunting season.

Supporting House Bill No. 2106 is a positive step for legislators to ensure recreation is not eroded by the Pennsylvania Game Commission changed regulation as they have in the past by limiting state game land for shared recreation use. We believe the final goal of the PGC is to have unlimited Sunday Hunting throughout the entire hunting season. The past several years PGC hunting seasons have increased in length and types of hunting, placing hunters in PA woods approximately six months of a calendar year. PEC recognizes hunting is an important part of PA culture and wildlife management. We do not oppose hunting, but Pa residents also deserve the ability to enjoy PA outdoors without the fear of imposing themselves on a hunt or organized group hunt. Often individual hunters or organized hunting groups use trails during hunts as starting and stopping points. Watching the hunted game to cross trails during a

drive is a common practice and is very dangerous for other trail users. Saving one day (Sunday) allows a piece of mind and safe use for other types of non-hunting recreation.

Most hikers, bikers and equestrian hunters stay out of the woods during rifle seasons. Some choose this for safety and respect for the hunters. Increasing Sunday hunting will only limited recreation use and keep the non-hunter out of the woods to enjoy. When the public stays out of the forest, so does advocate awareness for the forest.

Recently the PGC sent out a notice to close 140 miles of Pa's historic "Horseshoe Trail" for all equestrian riding, nearly six months out of the year except for Sundays. We're only allowed to ride this trail on Sunday for six months. A trail we have used for 87 years, year-round. Clearly PGC has concerns about our safety during their hunters' hunts to enforce this type of strict policy. Safety alone should be enough to support House Bill No. 2106 and must become law to stop the PGC taking over all our public lands trying to support a 100% daily hunting season. PGC mission statement is geared to preserving wildlife, not recreation. We believe there is safe balance for all recreation users in Pennsylvania and daily hunting is not part of the equation.

Therefore, we encourage adopting House bill No. 2106 and limiting Sunday Hunting.

Respectfully

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