

Senator Ed Meyer, Chairman
Chair of the Environment
Room 3200
Legislative Office Building
Harford, CT 06106-1591

RE: Support for HB 5852: An Act Concerning the Control of Lyme Disease

Dear Senator Meyer;

I strongly support House Bill 5852. I live in southeastern Groton where, in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, we have successfully controlled Lyme disease for the past eight years. There are many scientific studies of our program's success as incidents of Lyme disease dropped over the years, however, I will give a personal view of its benefits. For me, reducing the risk of Lyme disease has given me the freedom to enjoy the very natural beauty that drew me here, and the native animals that live here.

Years ago, there were hundreds of deer living in the immediate area. Not only were the deer starving to death, having eaten all available vegetation, but the incidence of Lyme disease was very high.

Our primary method to reduce Lyme disease has been to control deer. In the eight years this program has been underway, a reasonable deer count recommended by the DEP has unobtrusively been achieved, by just a few hunters, and easily maintained once a year, allowing native plants to re-emerge, feeding and hosting the many native species dependent on them, and thus achieving the wonderful diversity of birds, butterflies, bees, etc. which is key to the survival of so many other animal species. As a result, the open space around our neighborhood, including Bluff Point and Haley Farm State parks, is now greatly enjoyed by walkers, bird watchers, bicyclists, and many more during all four seasons.

While programs to control deer have started during the past few years in some parts of the state, the DEP needs much more support from the public to make this a success story across Connecticut. I encourage the passage of this key initiative to raise awareness of the need for deer population control and to engender a statewide control of Lyme disease. Not only will we regain our freedom to enjoy our beautiful outdoors, with less fear of contracting this debilitating disease, but we will encourage the restoration of our beautiful native plant environment and the fantastic diversity of native animals it supports."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sue Sutherland, Chairperson - Wildlife Committee
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