



New York Farm Bureau
Jeff Williams, Deputy Director
P.518.436.8495
jwilliams@nyfb.org

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 4825 (Senator Ortt) / Assembly Bill 6521 (Assemblyman Hawley)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ENVIROMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW, IN RELATION TO ALLOWING THE USE OF RIFLES FOR DEER HUNTING IN THE COUNTY OF ORLEANS

Date: 5/19/2017

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization, urges you to support the above referenced legislation. This bill would change statute to allow rifle hunting in Orleans County.

It has long been recognized that the number of active hunters in New York State is declining, while at the same time the deer population continues to increase. Farmers see considerable damage to their crops from deer consumption and are increasingly requesting additional opportunities to control the wildlife populations on their property. These requested opportunities certainly extend to allowing the use of rifles, which are more powerful and accurate than shotguns, to be used in areas of the state that currently do not have the opportunity, including Orleans County.

The landscape of central New York has changed dramatically over the past century. What typically served as vast quantities of open pasture and farmland has now been primarily converted to brush and forested lands. This provides deer with plentiful amounts of food, protection from hunters and greatly reduces the range of all guns. However, residents of these counties are precluded from hunting deer with a rifle in order to better manage the deer population.

Deer damage to agricultural operations in New York, including nursery stock damage, is estimated at \$75 million annually. It has also been reported that insurance claims filed in response to deer-vehicle collisions are approximately \$120 million each year in New York. The increased medical costs and public health impacts of deer-borne diseases, such as Lyme Disease, are such that the current over population of deer is now causing a public health problem across New York State. These issues clearly must be addressed by further reducing the deer population.

As a result, your support of this legislation is requested.