



**New York Farm Bureau**  
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## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

**Senate Bill 1153 (Senator Ortt) / Assembly Bill 534 (Assemblywoman Gunther)**

***CONCURRENT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY PROPOSING  
AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION, IN RELATION TO THE RIGHT TO  
HUNT, TRAP AND FISH***

**Date: 6/8/2017**

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New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm advocacy organization, urges you to support this legislation. This bill, if enacted, creates an amendment to the state constitution to protect the rights of New York State residents to hunt, trap and fish within our borders.

Certainly, farmers enjoy these activities from a recreational standpoint. However, from a business perspective, the landscape of New York State 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 and protection from hunters.

As a result, 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. A constitutional protection of hunting, trapping and fishing would help ensure the rights of farmers and others to protect their land, property and health.

Beyond deer, however, the issue of damage to farm animals and farmland caused by coyotes, bear, beaver and other wildlife is very real to farmers, as they can cause considerable economic damage to a farm operation. Protecting our rights to hunt and trap, especially on farms, is critical to the long-term success of the farm industry in the state.

For these reasons New York Farm Bureau requests your support of this legislation.

*June 8, 2017*