

January 12, 2015

Sourland Conservancy
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Resolution Supporting A-3039 Permitting Commercial Deer Hunting in New Jersey

WHEREAS, a severe overpopulation of whitetail deer in the Sourland Mountain region poses serious threats to forest ecosystems and to the area's human population; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's laws prohibiting commercial hunting of deer are outdated, unnecessary and counterproductive; and

WHEREAS, the Spring-time deer population in the Sourlands has been consistently measured to be between 100 and 220 deer per square mile; and

WHEREAS, deer browse has destroyed the vast majority of forest understory in the Sourlands; and

WHEREAS, the destruction of forest understory greatly reduces the extent and diversity of plant life in the Sourlands and degrades or eliminates critical habitat for a wide variety of wildlife; and

WHEREAS the Sourland forest itself is dying because regeneration of the forest is impossible when nearly all young trees are being destroyed by deer browse; and

WHEREAS, a deer population reduced to between 5 and 20 per square mile is necessary to permit the forest to regenerate; and

WHEREAS, the overpopulation of deer is a major contributor to the spread of Lyme disease, which is epidemic in the Sourlands; and

WHEREAS, the overpopulation of deer causes hundreds of serious automobile accidents each year in the Sourland region, sometimes leading to major injuries and human fatalities; and

WHEREAS, the overpopulation of deer causes significant economic damage through loss of crops and landscaping; and

WHEREAS, recreational hunting alone has proven to be inadequate to address the problem; and

WHEREAS, alternative means of controlling the deer population are impracticable; and

WHEREAS, allowing the commercial sale of venison would provide New Jersey consumers with affordable access to a healthy, delicious, locally-produced delicacy;

WHEREAS, allowing the commercial sale of venison is an important component of the Sourland Comprehensive Deer Management Plan adopted by the Sourland Conservancy in 2014; and

WHEREAS, a bill (A-3039) has been introduced in the New Jersey legislature to establish a commercial deer hunting license and allowing the commercial sale of venison; and

WHEREAS commercial deer hunting would be regulated by the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection Division of Fish and Wildlife to assure safety and to guarantee continued abundant opportunities for recreational hunting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Sourland Conservancy as follows:

1. The Sourland Conservancy supports the passage of A-3039.
2. The Sourland Conservancy urges the New Jersey Senate to introduce and adopt a companion bill.
3. The Sourland Conservancy urges the Governor of New Jersey to support and promote A-3039, and to sign it into law upon approval by the legislature.
4. The Sourland Conservancy urges the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection Division of Fish and Wildlife to support the legislation and ensure its effective implementation.
5. The Sourland Conservancy seeks the cooperation of other New Jersey environmental organizations to endorse A-3039 and to promote commercial deer hunting as a necessary and effective means of reducing the deer population.

ATTEST:

Executive Director
Sourland Conservancy
January 20, 2015

President, Board of Trustees
Sourland Conservancy
January 20, 2015