

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS

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APR 05 2006
C.A.O.'s OFFICE

Town of Markham
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, Ontario
L3R 9W3

Dear Mayor/Reeve:

You may recall that last year, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (O.F.A.H.) and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (O.F.A.), contacted all municipalities in southern Ontario in support of a new initiative to allow for gun hunting on Sundays during regular hunting seasons.

At that time, 67 municipalities across southern Ontario voted in favor of Sunday gun hunting, which will take effect September 1, 2006 and be a part of all subsequent regulated hunting seasons.

Your municipality is one of those that received the information and voted against Sunday gun hunting action at that time. However, the O.F.A.H. has recently been receiving calls from municipalities who, like yours, did not initially endorse Sunday gun hunting, but who are now reconsidering their position and asking how they can be included on the list of municipalities who said "yes." Because of this, we are asking your Council to revisit this issue and provide an opportunity for public input and discussion.

As a reminder, there were three main reasons behind the Sunday gun hunting proposal:

- 1) Each year, approximately \$40-45 million in crop damage is caused by wildlife, most notably deer and Canada geese. While farmers expect some losses in the course of their activities, these losses have climbed to unforeseen levels in many areas. In its October 2004 report, the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommended the addition of Sunday gun hunting in southern Ontario as a means of reducing the population and the losses suffered by farmers.
- 2) In many areas of southern Ontario, the increase in deer populations has become a serious public safety issue. Two years ago, the region of Ottawa-Carleton reported over 700 deer/car collisions in one year. In Peterborough County, the Ontario Provincial Police (O.P.P.) reported that one in five car accidents involves a deer collision; in Elgin County deer cause 30% of crashes investigated by the O.P.P.; and in 2005, Northumberland O.P.P. reported 117 accidents involving deer where the damage to vehicles was over \$1,000. These figures do not include nonreported accidents where police were not contacted, but the O.P.P. estimate that the number could be double what was reported.

Last fall, the Ministry of Transportation released new figures indicating that one in every 18 vehicle crashes in Ontario involves a wild animal, and that on average there is a motor vehicle/wild animal collision every 38 minutes, an 86% increase over the past decade! In 2003 alone, there were four people killed, 500 injured and over 13,729 collisions involving wildlife occurred across the province. The cost of these accidents in terms of personal injury and damage to vehicles is a serious threat to the public safety, to say nothing of the insurance issues and increased costs associated with this type of accident.

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CONSERVATION PLEDGE

I give my pledge, as a Canadian, to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my Country -- its soils and minerals, its air, water, forests, and wildlife.

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- 3) The Ministry of Natural Resources has long held that hunting is the most cost-effective wildlife management tool, without which, the Ministry could not possibly be able to cope with burgeoning wildlife populations in some areas.

Two years ago, the Province of Ontario passed the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act, which recognizes the heritage value of hunting and fishing. For many people, hunting is a family activity. Unfortunately, for people who work during the week, they currently have only one day per week for gun hunting where they can share in this activity with their spouses, children, and other family members. By providing for gun hunting on Sundays, these same people will have double the time to engage in this activity, the threat to public safety will be reduced as the wildlife population is brought under control, as will the amount of crop damage being experienced by local farmers.

In the case of private property, local owners will still have the right to determine whether to allow for Sunday gun hunting on their land, just as they do for the rest of the week and/or for archery hunting which is currently allowed on Sundays. We would also point out that gun hunting on Sundays has long been the case in all of northern Ontario and in some parts of eastern Ontario, and that bow hunting on Sundays is already allowed throughout the province. The province's proposal to include gun hunting on Sundays is not intended to displace current archery hunters, but to provide another option, and will also apply during currently regulated hunting seasons only, which would add no more than 12 additional days throughout the entire year.

We hope that this letter has helped to address some of the concerns that the Members of Council may have had during your initial consideration of this issue, and would respectfully ask that Council revisit its decision and provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment on the Sunday gun hunting proposal at a future Council meeting. We would also be pleased to appear as a deputation before Council to answer any questions or concerns you may still have.

Should you and the Members of Council require any further information on this issue, I know that the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the O.F.A.H., and the O.F.A. would be happy to assist you in this regard. If your Council does review this issue and vote in support of Sunday gun hunting, please send notice of this change to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Director of Fish and Wildlife, 300 Water Street, P.O. Box 7000, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 8M5.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours in Conservation,



Greg Farrant
Government Relations Manager

GF/jb

cc: Local M.P./M.P.P.
O.F.A.H. Board of Directors
Mike Reader, O.F.A.H. Executive Director
Terry Quinney, O.F.A.H. Provincial Manager of Fish & Wildlife Services
Andy Houser, O.F.A.H. Government Relations Advisor