



City of Ann Arbor
City Administrator's Office
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January 16, 2018

Representative Gary Howell, Committee Chair, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Beau LeFave, Majority Vice Chair, Natural Resources Committee
Representative David Maturen, Member, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Joseph Bellino, Member, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Daire Rendon, Member, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Curt VanderWall, Natural Resources Committee
Representative William Sowerby, Member, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Stephanie Chang, Member, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Sara Cambensy, Member, Natural Resources Committee
Representative Yousef Rahbi, Member, 53rd District
Representative Adam Zemke, Member, 55th District
Michigan House of Representatives, Natural Resources Committee
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Honorable Members:

The City of Ann Arbor is operating under a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) research permit involving the sterilization of deer as a component of a larger deer management program. We believe we're the only community presently utilizing sterilization of deer within Michigan, although we are aware that other governmental entities are interested in the outcome of these efforts. Consequently we feel it's important for the Commission to be aware of Ann Arbor's experience as it deliberates on the HB 5321, which would prohibit the sterilization of game. We also believe direct coordination between local agencies and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on a case-by-case basis would be an efficient means to safely manage our precious wildlife resources. This direction is consistent with other policy developments that have recognized DNR as being in the best position to implement policy initiatives.

As background, Ann Arbor is separated into five distinct Wards for local governance purposes. An aerial (helicopter) survey of the deer population was performed with a concentration on Wards 1 & 2. In 2017 the deer population in just these two wards was estimated to be 450. The city also invested in a multi-year deer browse damage research study which indicates substantial deer browse damage in its natural areas. The results of these studies as well as other data relevant data on deer is available on the City's website at:

<https://www.a2gov.org/departments/community-services/Pages/Deer-Management-Metrics-.aspx>.

On January 4, 2017, the MDNR Wildlife Division issued a research permit to White Buffalo, Inc. (the City of Ann Arbor's contractor) which included sharpshooting 100 deer and sterilizing up to 80 does (via ovariectomy). The research will provide insight on how the two methods can be utilized to complement each other. On December 4, 2017, the MDNR issued a permit for the second year of the project for sharpshooting 250 deer while keeping the cumulative sterilization of deer at 80.

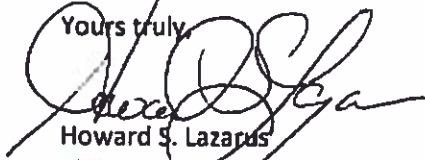
While the State is legally responsible for the wildlife in Michigan, the City of Ann Arbor has struggled with the localized impacts of deer browse damage and increasing deer vehicle collisions until the existing program was initiated. Not all of our residents agree with sharpshooting, sterilization, or even other measures to manage an urban deer population. However, there are several reasons by we believe sterilization can be a useful option for the MDNR to have to address the varied needs and requirements of the wildlife.

Ann Arbor is a city of approximately 120,000 residents with a density of approximately 4,000 residents per square mile. The density varies with some areas having larger lots to large areas with neighborhoods with smaller homes on smaller lots. In addition, the elementary and middle schools are typically located within the neighborhoods. The City's interpretation of the federal prohibiting shooting of firearms within a 1,000 feet of schools, leaves large pockets in the city where sharpshooting and hunting cannot be done. The darting and sterilization of deer, if proven effective, can be a useful method for the MDNR to authorize to help manage deer impacts in dense urban areas.

In addition given the size of the city, make-up of the open space, and the number of deer present, bow hunting doesn't appear to be a practical solution either.

The City of Ann Arbor encourages the Committee to not advance HB 5321 so that the MDNR has the ability to evaluate and utilize sterilization as it deems appropriate to address the varied and complicated issues surrounding its mission to conserve, protect, manage, and support the use and enjoyment of the state's natural resources.

Yours truly,



Howard S. Lazarus
City Administrator

- cc: C Warpehoski, Chair, Council Policy Agenda Committee
- J Lumm, Council Policy Agenda Committee
- C Smith, Council Policy Agenda Committee
- T Crawford, Chief Financial Officer
- D Delacourt, Community Services Administrator
- D Forsyth, Safety Manager
- L Wondrash, Communications Manager
- K Profit, GCSI
- G Owen, GCSI