

Name: _____
Street: _____
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NYS DEC Commissioner Peter Grannis
625 Broadway - 14th Floor
Albany, New York 12233-1011

Dear Commissioner Grannis,

I am writing to discuss the effects of the DEC's season restructuring which has impacted hunters in the state and became a matter of importance to the New York sporting community. In 2005 the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) enacted a regulation change that opened the southern zone, early archery-only season on the Saturday after Columbus Day, ending on the 3rd Friday in November. This change significantly affected bowhunters by taking away a primary weekend of bowhunting during the November rut and by reducing our ability to assist in the harvesting of antlerless deer.

As a result of this 2005 regulation change the 2008 early archery season in the southern zone only lasted 28 days as compared to a 35 day season in 2007. Thus the 2008 season was seven (7) days shorter than the 2007 season and up to ten (10) days shorter when compared to the old season structure that always opened on October 15th. This short 28 day southern zone early archery season occurs two more times in the next 6 years, with back to back 28 day seasons occurring in 2013 and 2014. I find this totally unacceptable.

A loss of 10 days during the early archery season is a 26% reduction of available hunting time (38 days as compared to 28 days). This loss of hunting time was never more apparent than in 2008 when bowhunters in the southern zone had only 4 weekends to pursue their quarry during the 2008 early archery season. However, regular season hunters also enjoyed 4 weekends in order to harvest a deer with a firearm. **I find it unacceptable that Southern Zone archers had 4 weekends to pursue deer with a bow and arrow during 2008 and Southern Zone regular hunters had 4 weekends to harvest a deer.** I cannot think of another state where the archery season is approximately the same length as the regular gun season.

With respect to New York State's current hunting age restrictions, we are severely handicapping our youths ability to participate in the outdoor sports. In order to perpetuate more involvement from our youth, they need to be exposed to the outdoors and game animals during weather conditions which will allow them to have a more enjoyable experience. Opening the early archery season on an earlier date can accomplish this goal. It will also assist those physically challenged hunters who may need assistance by cane or wheelchair, to reach their hunting locations, as this task can get more difficult as the season progresses.

Both the regular season and the muzzleloading season have a fixed number of hunting days annually. The early bowhunting season however, does not and lacks the structure of a recognizable fixed opening date. To compensate hunters for their loss of hunting opportunity, while allowing additional hunting time for young hunters, women and the physically challenged during more ideal warmer weather conditions, it would be advantageous to **annually** open the southern zone, early archery season at the beginning of the license year on October 1st and the northern zone archery season on September 1st. The additional hunting opportunity would also assist the DEC in their efforts to manage the deer herd via increased harvest of antlerless deer. Antlerless deer are still in their early season feeding patterns at the beginning of October, thus allowing hunters the ability to pattering their movements.

Unfortunately, as a bowhunter, I cannot let this issue rest until we regain our lost season time. I would like to thank you for listening to my concerns and I am extremely hopeful that the early archery-only seasons will open on October 1st, 2009 in the southern zone and September 1st, 2009 in the northern zone. The northern and southern zone archery season closures could end following their current structure.

Sincerely,