



# QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 3 March 2009  
To: Game and Fisheries Committee  
From: Kip Adams, Northern Director of Education and Outreach  
Re: HB 281

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) and the Pennsylvania State Chapter I am writing to provide support for HB 281 which would enhance mentored youth hunting opportunities. The QDMA is an international nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management and preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. Among QDMA's 53,000 members are more than 3,000 of the nation's leading wildlife and forestry professionals. As such, QDMA is widely regarded as the most respected whitetail organization in the United States.

Hunters play an important role in Pennsylvania's societal and economic well being. Hunters provide a free ecological service to society by managing deer and other wildlife populations and provide more than \$1.5 billion annually to Pennsylvania's economy. Unfortunately the number of hunters in Pennsylvania is decreasing. Currently, Pennsylvania only recruits 62 hunters for every 100 it loses. This is 10% below the national average, and 28 states have a higher hunter replacement ratio. Pennsylvania's age and/or eligible species restrictions limit youth participation and negatively impact the Commonwealth's ability to attract new hunters.

Increasing youth hunting opportunities is the preferred way to reverse this trend. Pennsylvania's Mentored Youth Hunting Program was launched in 2006 and it was an immediate success. During its first two years, nearly 103,000 mentored youths hunted with over 84,000 adult mentors. Those youths harvested nearly 114,000 squirrels, over 88,000 woodchucks, and nearly 3,500 spring gobblers. While the program has been expanded since its inception, mentored youth are still limited in the species and/or sex of species they can hunt. Enhancing opportunities for mentored youth can lead to additional time afield, rewarding experiences for youths and mentors, and improved hunter replacement ratios.

Pennsylvania's Mentored Youth Hunting Program is a resounding success. House Bill 281 can build on the foundation of this great program and enhance its opportunities for mentored youth. We support youth hunting and urge you to support HB 281. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information. Thank you for consideration of this important matter and for your commitment to Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams  
Northern Director of Education & Outreach / Wildlife Biologist

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*The QDMA is dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management  
and the preservation of the deer-hunting heritage.*

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