



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 724**

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7231

*House of Representatives, April 16, 2025*

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. PARKER of the 101st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING ON PRIVATE LANDS OF TEN ACRES OR MORE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 26-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

3 The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall  
4 enforce all of the laws relating to fish and wildlife of the state and shall  
5 possess all powers necessary to fulfill the duties prescribed by law with  
6 respect thereto and to bring actions in the proper courts of this state for  
7 the enforcement of such laws and the orders and regulations adopted  
8 and promulgated by said commissioner. Said commissioner shall have  
9 the supervision of hatcheries and retaining ponds and of the  
10 introduction, propagation, securing and distribution of such fish and  
11 wildlife as are adapted to the waters or lands of this state, and may  
12 designate, as closed to fishing, areas of inland waters to provide for  
13 spawning beds. The commissioner may take at any time or place, other  
14 than Sundays on public lands or private lands of less than ten acres,

15 using any method consistent with professional wildlife management  
16 principles, any fish, crustacean, bird or animal for scientific and  
17 educational purposes, public health and safety, propagation and  
18 dissemination, or protection of natural or agricultural ecosystems. Such  
19 taking shall not include the use of a snare. In the case of an imminent  
20 threat to public health or public safety, notwithstanding any provision  
21 of the general statutes, the commissioner may take at any time or place,  
22 using any method consistent with professional wildlife management  
23 principles, any fish, crustacean, bird or animal. Said commissioner shall  
24 have jurisdiction of all matters relating to fish and wildlife on any land  
25 belonging to the state and the regulation of hunting, fishing and  
26 trapping and the use of the waters of any lake, pond or stream on such  
27 land. The commissioner shall not grant to any conservation officer,  
28 appointee or other person any special privileges with respect to hunting,  
29 fishing, trapping or the use of the waters of any lake, pond or stream on  
30 such land. Said commissioner may erect buildings upon any such land,  
31 subject to the permission of the authorities of any institution or  
32 commission controlling such land and the approval of the  
33 Commissioner of Administrative Services and the State Properties  
34 Review Board. The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental  
35 Protection may employ such special assistants as necessary. Said  
36 commissioner shall cooperate with the United States Fish and Wildlife  
37 Service and the fish and wildlife commissioners of other states. Said  
38 commissioner may acquire, by gift or lease and, with the approval of the  
39 Governor alone, by purchase, lands for the establishment of fish  
40 hatcheries or game preserves and fisheries or wildlife management  
41 areas. Said commissioner may, with the approval of the Attorney  
42 General, grant rights-of-way or other easements or leases for public  
43 purposes to the United States government, any subdivision of the state  
44 or any public utility within the state on or with respect to any lands  
45 under jurisdiction of said commissioner if said commissioner finds that  
46 such purposes are not in conflict with the public interest, provided any  
47 such public utility shall pay for any right-of-way, easement or lease so  
48 granted such compensation as said commissioner considers reasonable.  
49 Said commissioner shall have authority to establish the boundaries of

50 any properties under the jurisdiction of said commissioner by  
51 agreement with owners of adjoining property and may, with the  
52 approval of the Attorney General alone, exchange land with such  
53 property owners and execute deeds in the name of the state for the  
54 purpose of establishing such boundaries. The commissioner may  
55 provide for the importation of fish and wildlife, and provide for the  
56 protection, propagation and distribution of such imported or native fish  
57 and wildlife. The commissioner may locate, lay out, construct and  
58 maintain nurseries and rearing ponds where fish may be planted,  
59 propagated and reared and liberate and distribute such fish in the  
60 waters of this state. Said commissioner may acquire by gift, purchase,  
61 capture or otherwise any fish or wildlife for propagation, experimental  
62 or scientific purposes. Notwithstanding any provisions of the general  
63 statutes, said commissioner may destroy and dispose of any undesirable  
64 or diseased wildlife in the interest of wildlife management at any time  
65 or place and using any method consistent with professional wildlife  
66 management principles if said commissioner determines that such  
67 wildlife (1) aggressively invades, or is likely to be detrimental to,  
68 agricultural crops, native plants, livestock or wildlife, (2) is likely to be  
69 a carrier of insects, disease or parasites detrimental to such crops, plants  
70 or wildlife, (3) is likely to have a detrimental effect on natural or  
71 agricultural ecosystems, (4) is likely to be detrimental to endangered or  
72 threatened species or species of special concern, as listed in the  
73 regulations adopted by the commissioner under this chapter, or such  
74 species' essential habitats, or (5) causes severe property damage. The  
75 commissioner may enter into cooperative agreements with educational  
76 institutions and state, federal or other agencies to promote wildlife  
77 research and to train personnel for wildlife management, information,  
78 distribution and education projects, and may enter into cooperative  
79 agreements with federal agencies, municipalities, corporations,  
80 organized groups or landowners, associations and individuals for the  
81 development of fish or wildlife management and demonstration  
82 projects. The commissioner may allocate and expend for the protection,  
83 restoration, preservation and propagation of fish and wildlife all funds  
84 of the state collected, appropriated and acquired for the purpose.

85       Sec. 2. Section 26-73 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
86 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

87       Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, Sunday shall be a  
88 closed season except for hunting on private lands of ten acres or more  
89 or hunting deer with bow and arrow on private property and for the  
90 purpose of trapping under the provisions of this chapter. The possession  
91 in the open air on Sunday of any implement for hunting, except for bow  
92 and arrow, shall be prima facie evidence of hunting in violation of the  
93 provisions of this section. No provision of this section shall be construed  
94 so as to affect any provision of section 26-31, 26-48, 26-52 or 27-35.  
95 Artificially propagated birds designated by the commissioner may be  
96 shot on Sundays on licensed private shooting preserves subject to such  
97 regulations of the commissioner as may apply to such private shooting  
98 preserves, provided permission so to shoot has been obtained from the  
99 town or towns within which such licensed private shooting preserves  
100 are located. Any person who hunts deer on Sunday with bow and arrow  
101 on private property pursuant to this section shall: (1) Have the written  
102 permission of the private property owner where such hunting is  
103 conducted, and (2) carry such written permission upon his or her person  
104 during the hunting. No person shall hunt with bow and arrow on  
105 Sunday on private property pursuant to this section within forty yards  
106 of a blazed hiking trail.

107       Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 26-82 of the general statutes is  
108 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
109 *1, 2025*):

110       (a) No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill any deer or sell or  
111 offer for sale or have in possession the flesh of any deer captured or  
112 killed in this state, or have in possession the flesh of any deer from any  
113 other state or country unless it is properly tagged as required by such  
114 state or country except as provided by the terms of this chapter or  
115 regulations adopted pursuant thereto, and except that any landowner  
116 or primary lessee of land owned by such landowner or the husband or  
117 wife or any lineal descendant of such landowner or lessee or any

118 designated agent of such landowner or lessee may kill deer with a  
119 shotgun, rifle or bow and arrow provided a damage permit has first  
120 been obtained from the commissioner and such person has not been  
121 convicted for any violation of this section, section 26-85, 26-86a, as  
122 amended by this act, 26-86b or 26-90 or subsection (b) of section 26-86a-  
123 2 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies within three years  
124 preceding the date of application. Upon the receipt of an application, on  
125 forms provided by the commissioner and containing such information  
126 as said commissioner may require, from any landowner who has or  
127 whose primary lessee has an actual or potential gross annual income of  
128 twenty-five hundred dollars or more from the commercial cultivated  
129 production of grain, forage, fruit, vegetables, flowers, ornamental plants  
130 or Christmas trees and who is experiencing an actual or potential loss of  
131 income because of severe damage by deer, the commissioner shall issue  
132 not more than six damage permits without fee to such landowner or the  
133 primary lessee of such landowner, or the wife, husband, lineal  
134 descendant or designated agent of such landowner or lessee. The  
135 application shall be notarized and signed by all landowners or by the  
136 landowner or a lessee to whom a farmer tax exemption permit has been  
137 issued pursuant to subdivision (63) of section 12-412. Such damage  
138 permit shall be valid through October thirty-first of the year in which it  
139 is issued and may specify the hunting implement or shot size or both  
140 which shall be used to take such deer. The commissioner may at any  
141 time revoke such permit for violation of any provision of this section or  
142 for violation of any regulation pursuant thereto or upon the request of  
143 the applicant. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 26-85, the  
144 commissioner may issue a permit to any landowner or primary lessee  
145 of land owned by such landowner or the husband or wife or any lineal  
146 descendant of such landowner or lessee and to not more than three  
147 designated agents of such landowner or lessee to use a jacklight for the  
148 purpose of taking deer when it is shown, to the satisfaction of the  
149 commissioner, that such deer are causing damage which cannot be  
150 reduced during the daylight hours between sunrise and one-half hour  
151 after sunset on the land of such landowner. The commissioner may  
152 require notification as specified on such permit prior to its use. Any deer

153 killed in accordance with the provisions of this section shall be the  
154 property of the owner of the land upon which the same has been killed,  
155 but shall not be sold, bartered, traded or offered for sale, and the person  
156 who kills any such deer shall tag and report each deer killed, as  
157 provided in section 26-86b. Upon receipt of the report required by  
158 section 26-86b, the commissioner shall issue an additional damage  
159 permit to the person making such report. Any deer killed otherwise than  
160 under the conditions provided for in this chapter or regulations adopted  
161 pursuant thereto shall remain the property of the state and may be  
162 disposed of by the commissioner at the commissioner's discretion to any  
163 state institution or may be sold and the proceeds of such sale shall be  
164 remitted to the State Treasurer, who shall apply the same to the General  
165 Fund, and no person, except the commissioner, shall retail, sell or offer  
166 for sale the whole or any part of any such deer. No person shall be a  
167 designated agent of more than one landowner or primary lessee in any  
168 calendar year. No person shall make, set or use any trap, snare, salt lick,  
169 bait or other device for the purpose of taking, injuring or killing any  
170 deer, except that deer may be taken over an attractant in areas  
171 designated by the commissioner. For the purposes of this section, an  
172 attractant means any natural or artificial substance placed, exposed,  
173 deposited, distributed or scattered that is used to attract, entice or lure  
174 deer to a specific location including, but not limited to, salt, chemicals  
175 or minerals, including their residues or any natural or artificial food,  
176 hay, grain, fruit or nuts. The commissioner may authorize any  
177 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding  
178 organization approved by the commissioner under the provisions of  
179 this section to take deer at any time [, other than Sundays,] or place using  
180 any method consistent with professional wildlife management  
181 principles when a severe nuisance or ecological damage can be  
182 demonstrated to the satisfaction of the commissioner. Any such  
183 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding  
184 organization shall submit to the commissioner, for the commissioner's  
185 review and approval, a plan that describes the extent and degree of the  
186 nuisance or ecological damage and the proposed methods of taking.  
187 Prior to the implementation of any such approved plan, the

188 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding  
189 organization shall provide notice of such plan to any abutting  
190 landowners of such place where the plan will be implemented. Such  
191 plan shall not authorize the use of a snare. No person shall hunt, pursue  
192 or kill deer being pursued by any dog, whether or not such dog is owned  
193 or controlled by such person, except that no person shall be guilty of a  
194 violation under this section when such a deer is struck by a motor  
195 vehicle operated by such person. No person shall use or allow any dog  
196 in such person's charge to hunt, pursue or kill deer. No permit shall be  
197 issued when in the opinion of the commissioner the public safety may  
198 be jeopardized.

199 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 26-86a of the general statutes is  
200 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
201 *1, 2025*):

202 (a) The commissioner shall establish by regulation adopted in  
203 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 standards for deer  
204 management, and methods, regulated areas, bag limits, seasons and  
205 permit eligibility for hunting deer with bow and arrow, muzzleloader  
206 and shotgun, except that no such hunting shall be permitted on Sunday  
207 unless it is conducted on private lands of ten acres or more or is by any  
208 means other than with bow and arrow on private property pursuant to  
209 section 26-73, as amended by this act. No person shall hunt, pursue,  
210 wound or kill deer with a firearm without first obtaining a deer permit  
211 from the commissioner in addition to the license required by section 26-  
212 27. Application for such permit shall be made on forms furnished by the  
213 commissioner and containing such information as he may require. Such  
214 permit shall be of a design prescribed by the commissioner, shall contain  
215 such information and conditions as the commissioner may require, and  
216 may be revoked for violation of any provision of this chapter or  
217 regulations adopted pursuant thereto. As used in this section,  
218 "muzzleloader" means a rifle or shotgun of at least forty-five caliber,  
219 incapable of firing a self-contained cartridge, which uses powder, a  
220 projectile, including, but not limited to, a standard round ball, mini-  
221 balls, maxi-balls and Sabot bullets, and wadding loaded separately at

222 the muzzle end, and "rifle" means a long gun the projectile of which is  
223 six millimeters or larger in diameter. The fee for a firearms permit shall  
224 be nineteen dollars for residents of the state and sixty-eight dollars for  
225 nonresidents, except that any nonresident who is an active full-time  
226 member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, may purchase  
227 a firearms permit for the same fee as is charged a resident of the state.  
228 The commissioner shall issue, without fee, a private land deer permit to  
229 the owner of ten or more acres of private land and the husband or wife,  
230 parent, grandparent, sibling and any lineal descendant of such owner,  
231 provided no such owner, husband or wife, parent, grandparent, sibling  
232 or lineal descendant shall be issued more than one such permit per  
233 season. Such permit shall allow the use of a rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader  
234 or bow and arrow on such land from November first to December thirty-  
235 first, inclusive. Deer may be so hunted at such times and in such areas  
236 of such state-owned land as are designated by the Commissioner of  
237 Energy and Environmental Protection and on privately owned land  
238 with the signed consent of the landowner, on forms furnished by the  
239 department, and such signed consent shall be carried by any person  
240 when so hunting on private land. The owner of ten acres or more of  
241 private land may allow the use of a rifle to hunt deer on such land  
242 during the shotgun season. The commissioner shall determine, by  
243 regulation, the number of consent forms issued for any regulated area  
244 established by said commissioner. The commissioner shall provide for  
245 a fair and equitable random method for the selection of successful  
246 applicants who may obtain shotgun and muzzleloader permits for  
247 hunting deer on state lands. Any person whose name appears on more  
248 than one application for a shotgun permit or more than one application  
249 for a muzzleloader permit shall be disqualified from the selection  
250 process for such permit. No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill  
251 deer with a bow and arrow without first obtaining a bow and arrow  
252 permit pursuant to section 26-86c. "Bow and arrow", as used in this  
253 section and in section 26-86c, means a bow with a draw weight of not  
254 less than forty pounds. The arrowhead shall have two or more blades  
255 and may not be less than seven-eighths of an inch at the widest point.  
256 No person shall carry firearms of any kind while hunting with a bow



257 and arrow under this section and section 26-86c.

258 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 26-91 of the general statutes is  
 259 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
 260 *1, 2025*):

261 (b) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may  
 262 authorize any municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-  
 263 holding organization approved by the commissioner under the  
 264 provisions of this section to take resident Canada geese at any time [,  
 265 other than Sundays,] or place using any method consistent with  
 266 professional wildlife management principles. Any such municipality,  
 267 homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding organization shall  
 268 submit to the commissioner, for the commissioner's review and  
 269 approval, a plan that describes the extent and degree of the nuisance or  
 270 ecological damage and the proposed method of taking. Such plan shall  
 271 include prohibitions against feeding of such geese and requirements  
 272 that landscaping in the area is managed in a way to be less hospitable to  
 273 geese, utilizing native plantings. Prior to the implementation of such  
 274 plan, the municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-  
 275 holding organization shall provide notice of such plan to abutting  
 276 landowners of such place where the plan will be implemented. Such  
 277 plan shall not authorize the use of a snare.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-3
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-73
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-82(a)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-86a(a)
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-91(b)

**ENV** Joint Favorable Subst.

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## **OFA Fiscal Note**

### **State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Judicial Dept. (Probation)	GF - Potential Savings	Minimal	Minimal
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Loss	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

### **Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill allows for Sunday hunting and trapping in certain circumstances which results in a potential savings to the Judicial Department for probation and a potential revenue loss to the General Fund from fines.<sup>1</sup> On average, the marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600<sup>2</sup> each year for adults and \$450 each year for juveniles.

The bill also permits the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to make several changes related to expanded hunting on Sunday, which is not anticipate to result in a fiscal impact as DEEP has the staff and expertise necessary to implement the changes.

### **The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

<sup>1</sup> From FY 20 - FY 24, 200 charges were recorded and \$2,075 in associated revenue was collected under CGS § 26-91, 26-86a, 26-82, and 26-73.

<sup>2</sup> Probation marginal cost is based on services provided by private providers and only includes costs that increase with each additional participant.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 7231*****AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING ON PRIVATE LANDS OF TEN ACRES OR MORE.*****SUMMARY**

This bill expands the ability to hunt on Sundays. Current law generally only allows the following on Sundays: deer hunting with bow and arrow on private property, shooting birds at private shooting preserves, and trapping. Primarily, the bill expands current law in the following ways:

1. allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to take (e.g., hunt or kill) wildlife on Sundays consistent with wildlife management principles on private lands that are 10 acres or more (§ 1);
2. allows Sunday hunting on private lands of at least 10 acres with any approved hunting implements (§ 2);
3. requires the DEEP commissioner to develop regulations that allow a person to hunt deer on private lands of at least 10 acres on Sundays with firearms (§ 4);
4. allows DEEP to authorize municipalities, homeowner associations, and nonprofit land-holding organizations to take deer on Sundays consistent with wildlife management principles if they show deer are a severe nuisance or are causing ecological damage, to the DEEP commissioner's satisfaction in a plan they file with DEEP (§ 3); and
5. allows the DEEP commissioner to authorize municipalities, homeowner associations, and nonprofit land-holding organizations to take resident Canadian geese on Sundays,

consistent with wildlife management principles and a plan they file with DEEP (§ 5).

By law, generally no one can hunt in Connecticut without first getting the appropriate licenses and permits from DEEP. Hunters must also comply with the relevant hunting regulations, which address things like the allowed hunting season, reporting requirements, and bag limits.

Under the bill, violations of the state's hunting laws carry a range of penalties depending on the specific statute violated. For example, hunting on Sundays on property that is less than 10 acres in violation of § 2 of the bill is a class D misdemeanor (subject to a fine of up to \$250, up to 30 days prison, or both) (CGS § 26-81). And a person who takes deer on Sundays on private land that is less than 10 acres in violation of § 4 of the bill is subject to a fine of between \$200 and \$500, up to 30 days prison, or both for a first violation, and a fine between \$200 and \$1,000, up to one year of prison, or both for a subsequent violation (CGS § 26-86a(b)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 30      Nay 3      (03/28/2025)