

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7051

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING A BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/27/2025

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Sen. Henri Martin, 31st Dist.](#)

[Rep. Mark W. Anderson, 62nd Dist.](#)

[Rep. Karen Reddington-Hughes, 66th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Patrick S. Boyd, 50th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

HB-7051 seeks to address concerns regarding black bear conservation in the state of Connecticut. No direct measure, mandated by the Connecticut General Assembly has been made on the specific control and management of the black bear population in this state, and through this legislation, it would produce a measure by which all agencies with expertise in this area would be able to collaborate and find the best way to conserve a healthy population of while protecting the public from black bears.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language implements a second section to the bill, authorizing the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection to, when and if deemed necessary by that person, that the black bear population exceeds the safe parameters, that they may petition the Governor to make an executive order to implement black bear population control measures immediately.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Commissioner, Katie Dykes Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection,](#)

Commissioner Dykes supports this bill because it would help address concerns regarding an increase in dangerous human-bear interactions. According to the department's research,

many bears have lost their innate fear of humans recently, as evidenced by the rise of attacks and other interactions, hence the need for a comprehensive plan to keep people safe, while keeping bear populations at stable and healthy levels.

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection also has many programs already in place regarding human-bear interactions, such as public education initiatives, non-lethal pacification programs, and assessment projects monitoring the black bear population in the state. With this information, the department supports the bill and wishes to cooperate with legislators further on these initiatives.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Connecticut General Assembly, Connecticut Senate, Senator Henri Martin](#): Supports this bill and state that wildlife professionals should be supported in their efforts to manage black bear population.

[CT Votes for Animals, Board Chair, Susan Linker](#): Supports this bill, but only with changes. They state that the amendments should include, a.) focusing on non-lethal tranquilization initiatives, b.) involving stakeholders in the management process, c.) acknowledging the ineffectiveness of bear hunting, as cited by sources like a 2014 study by the New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife seeing no decrease in black bear population or dangerous incidents with an uptick in hunting, and d.) empowering already existing legal framework in place that regulate and manage black bear populations in the state.

[Friends of Animals, Government Relations Manager, Nicole Rivard](#): Supports the bill, but says as it stands, it is much too heavy handed when it comes to management. They will only support it fully if the Committee implements their proposed amendment creating a community grant that would provide towns and cities with bear-proof trash bins and electric fences around beehives and livestock like chickens.

[Retired DEEP Wildlife Biologist, D. Christopher Vann](#): Supports this bill because it will increase public safety and support the efforts already underway in managing black bear populations as carried out by DEEP and local and state Law Enforcement and Animal Control agencies.

[Congressional Sportsman's Foundation, Assistant Manager, Christian Ragosta](#): Supports this bill because it would help find resolutions to the growing home invasions by bears in Connecticut as found by CT DEEP in 2022. Hunting would be, to this petitioner, a means to manage the population and bring CT into line with other states in the region who allow a legal bear hunt on quotas decided upon by local DEEP officials.

[Brandon Rezendes](#): Supports increased plans for management of black bear populations put forth by the state to help DEEP in executing these plans on which they have advised.

[John Andrighetti](#)

Supports this bill because by black bears are a threat on the public and other animal populations as they consume much of the fauna needed for other populations growth.

[Adnan Ayrula](#): Supports this bill citing the 50% increase of bear populations ever 5 years in Connecticut. He states that attacks from bears are motivated by food, and thus, a hunt is necessary to keep them in line, as evidenced by Massachusetts.

[Carey Bernstein](#): Supports this bill based on a personal interaction with a black bear and the evidence of a mauling of a child in Morris nearly to death.

[Thomas Entwistle](#): Supports this bill as it allows the DEEP to scientifically discover the best way to manage the black bear population and decrease dangerous interactions between them and humans.

[Dr. Mark Gilroy](#): Supports this bill citing the need to empower biologists at the CT DEEP to discover new and effective ways to control and manage black bear populations in our state, of which existing plans and programs have been ineffective to date.

[Andrew Gregory](#): Supports given the increasing level of home invasions perpetrated by black bears in our state.

[Edward Guerrere](#): Supports this bill and a hunt on black bears, many of whom have lost their fear of humans.

[Christopher Kagey](#): Supports the bill and believes a well-regulated lottery system would establish control of the population and make black bears fear humans, protecting the people.

[Robert Kalberer](#): Supports, given data saying a hunt would be beneficial to safety.

[Rockville Fish & Game Club, Member, Charles Mayer](#): Supports this bill citing a bear hunting season bill on the docket a few years back that had an 18-18 split in the CT Senate. It was voted nay by the Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman.

[Timothy Mason](#): Supports citing increased populations and the need of a lottery system for bear tags and a hunting season for black bears in Connecticut.

[Jeanie Phillips](#): Supports, saying that hunting bears does not equate to trophy hunting and many people do want this bill passed, despite the 1% of residents in this state who hunt being such a low number.

[Christian Pearson](#): Supports responsible and ethical hunting techniques pertaining to black bears to control their population.

[Northwest CT Sportsman's Council, Vice-president, Chris Marino](#): Supports this bill if allowed to control the population via hunting.

[Makenzie Larson](#): Supports, claiming this bill will both protect the conservation of the black bear population in Connecticut, and manage said population.

[Black Bear Management, Taylor Searles](#): Supports this bill and a controlled lottery for a bear hunt in this state, providing benefits to the state with a controlled bear population.

[Retired State Rep Dist. 66, David Wilson](#): Supports this bill because it would save the state from liability due to the increasing dangerous bear-human interactions.

[Chase Salazar](#): Supports this bill on the grounds of scientific management methods and an increase in public safety.

[CT Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Association, Inc, President, Richard Daniotti](#): Supports this bill emphasizing the need for lethal measures as well as non-lethal ones in cases of extreme danger.

Many individuals support this bill because it offers a bear management plan because the bear interactions are becoming more dangerous throughout the state.

These persons include:

[Donna Bacchiocchi](#): Supports.

[Rich Balestrieri](#): Supports.

[Black bear hunting in Ct yes, Edward Bleau](#): Supports.

[Justin Bongiorno](#): Supports.

[Shaun Bowman](#): Supports.

[Kieth Cagle](#): Supports.

[Mark Daigle](#): Supports.

[Nathan Franconi](#): Supports.

[Erich Fritz](#): Supports based on farm defense.

[Yes, Evan Haggerty](#): Supports.

[Mara Hanlon](#): Supports.

[PAC, Luci Hart](#): Supports.

[Mr. Peter Hawkins](#): Supports.

[Gary Herzig](#): Supports.

[Ryan Johnson](#): Supports.

[Mr. Troy Kaiser](#): Supports.

[Brian Kelly](#): Supports.

[Kimbery Kuhn](#): Supports.

[David Kuzma](#): Supports bear season.

[Robert Lamson](#): Supports.

[CCDL, Larry Lauer](#): Supports.

[Mr. Stephan Liszka](#): Supports.

[Henry Olrich](#): Supports.

[Jeff Palmer](#): Supports.

[Mr. Thomas Phelps](#): Supports.

[Mr. William Polowy](#): Supports.

[Stephen Blake](#): Supports.

[Alton Blodgett](#): Supports.

[Joseph Brouillard](#): Supports.

[Chas Catania](#): Supports.

[Kyle Cooney](#): Supports.

[Thomas Gallo](#): Supports.
[Dennis Grant](#): Supports.
[Lisa Herzig](#): Supports.
[Nicholas Kittle](#): Supports.
[Peter Kostopoulos](#): Supports.
[ANDRZEJ KUMIEGA](#): Supports.
[Michael Lamagdeleine](#): Supports.
[Joseph LaPorta](#): Supports.
[Brandon Loehle](#): Supports.
[Ryan Machalick](#): Supports.
[Peter Maisano](#): Supports.
[Tom Maloney](#): Supports.
[Dylan Martinez](#): Supports.
[Brian Mongeau](#): Supports.
[Paul Natoli](#): Supports.
[Johnny Nucifora](#): Supports.
[Joseph Orefice](#): Supports.
[Friends of CT Sportsmen, Michael Ose](#): Supports.
[George Paiva](#): Supports.
[Wayne Petroskey](#): Supports.
[Ronnie S](#): Supports.
[Mark Schmidt](#): Supports.
[Timothy Shettleworth](#): Supports.
[Frank Slapski](#): Supports.
[John Sweney](#): Supports.
[Jay Upton](#): Supports.
[Jeffery Yale](#): Supports.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Sharon Cregeen](#): Opposes this bill and states that management is done well with education, and not via trophy hunting.

[Emily Dickinson-Adams](#): Opposes this bill based on the inhumanity of trophy hunting.

[University of Oxford, Graduate Student, Zachary Berkowitz](#): Opposes this bill in its current form, but supports it if it were to amend sections regarding having the initiative fully controlled by the Commissioner of the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, which he claims is dangerous in silencing the voices of independent stakeholders.

Mr. Berkowitz proposes two amendments to this bill, namely to a.) create a task force with commissioners to create trust between them and the public when it comes to wildlife management, and b.) to strike the wording, “and the desired future status of such population, in various regions of the state”, which he posits will make sure this bill does not encourage a bear hunt and keep the process effective and democratic, as desired.

[Mrs. Ann Bilyew](#): Opposes this bill based on the danger in instituting a hunt on black bears, citing ineffective DEEP research on their populations and general lack of a scientific consensus on the issue.

[Debra Bologna](#): Opposes this bill based on the greater threat of coyotes in our State and seeing no action on their threat. Expresses that bears are only adapting to their conditions due to encroachment on their territory by humans who destroy their habitats and cause them to be more aggressive in the first place.

[Joseph Colasanto](#): Opposes on the grounds of the ineffectiveness of trophy hunting.

[Debra Cronin](#): Opposes based on scientific data showing that hunting will not reduce populations. Explains that it is imperative to treat these animals with compassion by educating the public on how best to avoid them and keep them, and humans, safe.

[Dr. Stacy Dudek](#): Opposes this bill citing the lack of scientific consensus on the effectiveness of a hunt and the intent of the people of Connecticut to live peacefully with black bears instead of hunting them.

[Siera Club Connecticut, Chapter Chair, Susan Eastwood](#): Opposes this bill because it would be much too costly and ultimately unnecessary due to the fact that DEEP has already implemented effective countermeasures. And overall, a hunt would negatively affect either the populations of black bears or the numbers of dangerous bear-human interaction.

[Kelly Frankenfield](#): Opposes citing the inhumanity of hunting black bears merely for "sport". And that science shows when the public is educated properly, attacks and dangerous interactions go down drastically.

[Allyson Halm](#): Opposes this bill encouraging increased education initiatives in its place.

[Consultant, Patricia Harmon](#): Opposes this bill based on a vehement denunciation of the cruel punishment to bears.

[Social worker, Melvie Hatfield](#): Opposes this bill citing the increased bear activity is being caused by unlocked trash cans, bird feeders, and such food sources. If these food sources were curtailed, bears would have no reason to venture forth from their habitats in the woodlands.

[Irene Hendricks](#): Opposes this bill, maintaining that this legislation is ultimately not necessary and excludes public participation in these management initiatives.

[Melissa Maddocks](#): Opposes this bill on the grounds of caring for animals and the importance of education on, not eradication of the black bear population in Connecticut.

[Robert McCarthy](#): Opposes claiming that most interactions are harmless and hunting these animals is not as effective as eliminating food supply in densely inhabited areas and an increase in public education.

[Former State Representative, David Michel](#): Opposes this bill as it serves to rehash previous bills proposed year on year without any real results. In essence, the danger, to this petitioner, is hunting, and through education and conservation efforts, safety can be achieved without hunting bears in the state of Connecticut.

[Anthony Ricciuti Jr](#): Opposes this bill as they see no threat posed by black bears to the public to require trophy hunting.

[Cindy Scannell](#): Opposes this bill claiming that cohabitation is better for wildlife and humans compared to hunting.

[Mary Sena](#): Opposes, citing the lack of a bear hunt in Rhode Island contrary to claims that Connecticut is the only state in New England without one. And that DEEP should be concerned with education on how to cohabitate with bears.

[Jade Vanacore](#): Opposes this bill positing that cohabitation education is the solution, not hunting.

[RN Sally Westcott](#): Opposes hunting of bears and this bill, citing Rhode Island as a prime example of how education and cohabitation reduce risk without the need of a hunt.

[Veronique Jarrell-King](#): Opposes the bill citing undermining of public trust and the, according to this petitioner dishonest testimony of DEEP. During the 2/27/2025 Public Hearing DEEP said that no other state in New England prohibits bear hunting, whereas Rhode Island prevents such practices.

[UConn, Sustainability Coordinator, Sydney Collins](#)Me: Opposes this bill on the grounds that food removal is more scientifically proven to lower bear attacks. She also cites the American Wildlife Values study where it was found Connecticut residents predominantly prefer to coexist with bears, and not have trophy hunting used as a management device.

[Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, Executive Director, Lori Brown](#): Opposes this bill claiming hunting does nothing to control bear populations. DEEP already possesses any and all tools necessary to do so. In addition to increasing public education initiatives.

[Jason Cote](#): Opposes this bill and says that with proper education, these instances would be far fewer.

[Caroline Emmanuel](#): Opposes this bill based on the recovering status of the bear population from trophy hunting in the past, along with the ecological impacts a culling of the species would be on our environment, of which bears are an important part.

[Janice Giordano](#): Opposes on the grounds of hunting being dangerous and overall, not useful for the intended purpose of this bill.

[Henderson, Judith Henderson](#): Opposes this bill due to the testimony given on 2/27/2025 which neglected the scientific evidence that food deprivation deters attacks and incidents.

[Humane World for Animals, CT State Director, Annie Hornish](#): Opposes this bill because it funds initiatives already implemented by the DEEP. They cite many sources which explain that hunting is not an effective tool for black bear management. States the only way to do so is manage human factors such as unguarded trash and livestock, along with the fact that sightings does not equate to population size.

[Kathleen Magner](#): Opposes citing threats like bird flu already affecting bear populations. Emphasizing non-lethal and non-hunting approaches to their management, as hunting, according to studies presented by this petitioner, shows no causation between hunting and population decrease.

Many individuals oppose this bill citing that the removal of food from public places and public education are better forms of population control than trophy hunting.

These persons include:

[MELISSA SILVA](#): Opposes.

[House bill 7051, Karen Slater](#): Opposes.

[Darlene Salonia](#): Opposes.

[Tom Tierney](#): Opposes.

[Melissa Mancini](#): Opposes.

[Marguerite Miller](#): Opposes.

[Humane World for Animals, manager, Dorrie Nang](#): Opposes.

[Agatha Pohorylo](#): Oppose.

[Dr. Kevin Walsh](#): Opposes.

[Michele Acton](#)

[Kelli Avci](#)

[WWF + many other wildlife orgs., WWF, Linda Balfour](#): Opposes.

[Rolf Bronzwaer](#): Opposes

[Ms. Nancy Crider](#): Opposes.

[Tina Fernandez](#): Opposes.

[Fawn Garbonola](#): Opposes.

[Mr. Sean O'Grady](#): Opposes.

[Bear Management, Leiba Harracksingh](#): Opposes.

[Cynthia Humphreville](#): Opposes.

[Jean Jerbert](#): Opposes.

[Mr. Jeffery Jump](#): Opposes.

[Kevin Keane](#): Opposes.

[Mrs. elizabeth kiernan](#): Opposes.

[P. Lee](#): Opposes.

[Barry Male](#): Opposes.

[Helping bears and bunnies, Melissa Mancini](#): Opposes.

[Anne Mazzone](#): Opposes.

[RETIRED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER, KATHLEEN MCCANN](#): Opposes.

[Professor Yale Medicine, Shirley Mccarthy](#): Opposes.

[Jenna McGann](#): Opposes.

[Diane Melson](#): Opposes.

[Prof. Len Messina](#): Opposes.

[Elisa Ordazzo](#): Opposes.
[Clarissa Porter](#): Opposes.
[Maria Riggione](#): Opposes.
[Cynthia Scannell](#): Opposes.
[Karen Schnitzer](#): Opposes.
[Irene Skrybailo](#): Opposes.
[Susan Smith](#): Opposes.
[Lesley Vainder](#): Opposes.
[Mr. Patrick Fischer](#): Opposes.
[Sylvie et Seck Hetzel Boulkeir](#): Opposes.
[TIA HRUSA](#): Opposes.
[Ms. Karen Johnson](#): Opposes.
[Kathryn Joyce](#): Opposes.
[Susan King](#): Opposes.
[Natalie Langlois](#): Opposes.
[Laura Lynch](#): Opposes.
[Nicolle Wuchek](#): Opposes

Reported by: Tom Atwood

Date: 3/25/25