
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7231 (as amended by House "A")*

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 with the property owner's permission, shooting birds at private shooting preserves, and trapping.

The bill generally allows Sunday hunting on private land with any approved hunting implements, except hunting migratory birds on Sunday remains prohibited, as it is under current law (§ 2). The bill requires a hunter to get and carry written permission from the private property owner to hunt there on Sunday. But it prohibits Sunday hunting within 40 yards of a blazed trail that is open to the public, including Connecticut blue blazed trails and federally designated and regulated trails. Relatedly, the bill effectively requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to develop regulations on hunting deer on private land on Sundays (§ 4).

The bill also expands current law in the following ways:

1. allows the DEEP commissioner to take (e.g., hunt or kill) wildlife on Sundays consistent with wildlife management principles (§ 1);
2. 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
3. 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, illegally hunting on Sundays in violation of § 2 of the bill is a class D misdemeanor (subject to a fine of up to \$250, up to 30 days in prison, or both) (CGS § 26-81). And a person who takes deer without a permit in violation of § 4 of the bill is subject to a fine of between \$200 and \$500, up to 30 days in 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)).

*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill with similar provisions but (1) removes the limitation allowing Sunday hunting only on private lands of at least 10 acres and (2) prohibits Sunday hunting within 40 yards of certain public trails. It also makes minor and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 30 Nay 3 (03/28/2025)