



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 2 February 2018
To: House Committee on Courts and Criminal Code
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: House Bill 1274

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to state our support for House Bill 1274 which would increase the penalties for poaching game species and taking threatened or endangered species. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

Wildlife is held in trust by the state for all of Indiana's citizens to enjoy. This public ownership of wildlife is an instrumental component of the successful North American Model for Wildlife Conservation. Ethical sportsmen created and have supported the North American Model for the past century. Unfortunately, unlawful activities with respect to wildlife contrast the Model, and illegally killing wildlife is nothing less than public theft.

Whitetails are the most popular big game animal in the U.S., and whitetail hunters are the foundation of the \$87 billion hunting industry. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately three of every four hunters pursues whitetails, and in Indiana over 270,000 hunters contribute more than \$146 million annually to the state's economy.

Whether for viewing or hunting, white-tailed deer are captivating, and this is especially true for large-antlered bucks. Part of their appeal lies in their relative scarcity due to the difficulty of raising one to maturity. Many of these animals are taken prior to maturity by hunters, are involved in deer-vehicle collisions, or they succumb to disease or other mortality factors. Thus, the investment of time, sweat equity and monetary resources required to grow a mature deer is substantial. These resources are far greater than the current restitution value of a deer "stolen" by a poacher. The proposed penalties included in this legislation more closely resembles the fair market value of a white-tailed deer.

House Bill 1274 would help reduce the number of unlawful activities with respect to white-tailed deer poaching and therefore will benefit the state, its wildlife and citizenry. We urge you to support House Bill 1274. Thank you for consideration of this matter and please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation