



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

DAVID H. KNAPP
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI
Deputy Clerk

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PUBLIC HEARING FOR ADOPTING A PILOT YOUTH DEER HUNTING PROGRAM JULY 6, 2021 12:50 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Knapp, Mr. May, Mr. Rowley, Mr. Burtis, Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Cody, Mrs. Abbott-Kenan, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Ryan, Dr. Chase, Mr. Holmquist, Mr. McBride, Mr. Bush, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Kinne

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mrs. Ervin, Mr. Williams

Chairman Knapp called the 12:50 p.m. public hearing to order at 1:16 p.m. The Clerk read the notice of public hearing and stated that the notice had been duly published.

Chairman Knapp asked for speakers wishing to be heard.

Steve Wowelco – Read the following statement:

Dear Members of the Onondaga County Legislature:

My name is Stephen Wowelco, I am the Sportsman's Representative appointed by Onondaga County to the Region 7 Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

Deer hunting is a valued tradition for many upstate families, providing quality food to New Yorkers and reducing the negative impacts of overabundant deer populations on agriculture, forests, and communities. Expanding youth hunting opportunities to assist with deer management and cultivating a new generation of hunters is a top priority for sportsmen.

For many years, sportsmen from Onondaga County have traveled to Albany to meet with our state assemblymen and senators to lobby for the ability for 12 and 13 year olds to be able to hunt.

Currently, young hunters that are 12 or 13 years old can already hunt big game using archery equipment and can hunt small game with a firearm, but until now, New York had been the only state to not allow these young hunters to hunt big game with a firearm. Prior to the adoption of Environmental Conservation Law §11-0935, 49 out of 50 states with New York being the exception, permitted 12 and 13 year olds to participate in hunting under varying circumstances.

I fully support the new Environmental Conservation Law section 11-935 which allows 12 – 13 year old licensed hunters to hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow, in upstate counties that choose to participate, especially within Onondaga County. Safety measures are an integral part of this law. The 12 – 13 year old must be in the physical

presence of a 21 year old licensed hunter, who has 3 years of hunting experience. Also the 12 – 13 year old must be licensed (having passed a Hunter Education/Safety Course), and all hunting must be done from ground level.

Young Hunters with adult supervision have a strong safety record in New York State.

In order for Onondaga County to participate in a 2 year pilot through 2023, the legislation requires the county to “opt-in”. Enabling legislation must be passed by the Onondaga County Legislature for the county to “opt-in”. I urge Onondaga County to “opt-in” at this time to give our youth this opportunity.

I look forward to your support and thank you for your time in this matter.

Chairman Knapp asked if anyone else would like to be heard on this topic. Hearing none, the public hearing was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jm', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature