

## Report Highlights

### The Potential Economic, Social, and Other Impacts of Expanding Sunday Hunting in Pennsylvania

House Resolution 2004-927 directed the LB&FC to conduct a study of the “social, economic, philosophical and practical impact of providing expanded hunting opportunities, including hunting on Sunday.” The LB&FC contracted with Southwick Associates for assistance in calculating the economic impact of two options: allowing expanded Sunday hunting for all Sundays during all seasons and allowing expanded Sunday hunting for only the two Sundays of the general deer season.

- **Opinions and Preferences.** Surveys were sent to 1,000 licensed hunters, 113 commercial hunting grounds, and 1,000 landowners. 53% of responding hunters favored some form of expanded Sunday hunting, as did 75% of commercial hunting ground operators. Allowing expanded Sunday hunting on all Sundays during all hunting seasons was the option most preferred by hunters; allowing expanded hunting only during the two Sundays of the general deer season was the second most preferred option.

Farmers and other landowners were overwhelmingly opposed to expanded Sunday hunting; 80% indicated they oppose or strongly oppose such a move. The two most commonly cited concerns of landowners were “privacy” and “religious/moral considerations.”

Surveys were also sent to 57 hunting, outdoor recreation, farm, religious, and trade organizations. The positions of the responding organizations are listed in the report.

- **Authority for Sunday hunting decisions.** Surveyed groups were asked which governmental body should have the ability to determine whether to allow expanded Sunday hunting.

	Who Should Have the Ability to Expand Sunday Hunting?		
	PA Game Commission	Legislature	Other/Don't Know
Licensed hunters.....	50%	18%	32%
Commercial hunting grounds .....	49	26	26
Landowners .....	35	37	28
Other organizations...	33	37	30

- **Economic Impacts.** Hunters reported that they would hunt an average of 4.7 additional days a year if Sunday hunting was allowed during all seasons. This information, combined with

economic impact information previously developed by Southwick, resulted in an estimated impact of \$629 million, with 5,300 new full- and part-time jobs and \$18 million in additional state sales and income taxes. If expanded Sunday hunting was only allowed during the two Sundays of the general deer season, the economic impact is estimated at \$185 million, with 1,627 new jobs and \$5.4 million in additional state taxes.

- **Religious, Social, and Practical Impacts.** Much of the opposition to Sunday hunting is based on the sanctity of the day and Sunday being a day of rest. Many landowners want to retain one day a week free from hunters, with 21% indicating they might post “No Sunday Hunting” signs and 18% indicating they might post their land closed to all public hunting if expanded Sunday hunting was allowed. Providing a day for other outdoor recreation opportunities without the concerns of having hunters in the woods was also frequently cited.

Factors cited in favor of expanded Sunday hunting include providing hunting opportunities for youth and others who must work or are otherwise busy on Saturdays and allowing the Game Commission greater flexibility to meet its deer management goals.

- **Other States.** PA is one of only 9 states to prohibit Sunday hunting. Four bordering states (OH, NY, MD, and WV) have recently allowed expanded Sunday hunting in all or parts of the state, with no significant problems being reported.

**Recommendation:**

A decision on expanded Sunday hunting is a policy matter beyond the purview of LB&FC staff. As such, the report contains no recommendations.