

1 AN ACT concerning wildlife.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Illinois Hunting Heritage Protection Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds the
7 following:

8 (1) Recreational hunting is an important and
9 traditional recreational activity in which 14,000,000
10 Americans 16 years of age and older participate.

11 (2) Hunters have been and continue to be among the
12 foremost supporters of sound wildlife management and
13 conservation practices in the United States.

14 (3) Persons who hunt and organizations related to
15 hunting provide direct assistance to wildlife managers and
16 enforcement officers of federal, state, and local
17 governments.

18 (4) Purchases of hunting licenses, permits, and stamps
19 and payment of excise taxes on goods used by hunters have
20 generated billions of dollars for wildlife conservation,
21 research, and management.

22 (5) Recreational hunting is an essential component of
23 effective wildlife management, in that it is an important
24 tool for reducing conflicts between people and wildlife and
25 provides incentives for the conservation of wildlife,
26 habitats, and ecosystems on which wildlife depend.

27 (6) Recreational hunting is an environmentally
28 acceptable activity that occurs and can be provided for on
29 State public lands without adverse effects on other uses of
30 that land.

31 Section 10. Definitions. For the purposes of this Act:

1 "Department" means the Department of Natural Resources.

2 "Department-managed lands" means those lands that the
3 Department owns or those lands of which the Department holds
4 management authority.

5 "Director" means the Director of Natural Resources.

6 "Hunting" means the lawful pursuit, trapping, shooting,
7 capture, collection, or killing of wildlife or the attempt to
8 pursue, trap, shoot, capture, collect, or kill wildlife.

9 Section 15. Recreational hunting.

10 (a) Subject to valid existing rights, Department-managed
11 lands shall be open to access and use for recreational hunting
12 except as limited by the Department for reasons of public
13 safety, fish or wildlife management, or homeland security or as
14 otherwise limited by law.

15 (b) The Department shall exercise its authority,
16 consistent with subsection (a), in a manner to support,
17 promote, and enhance recreational hunting opportunities, to
18 the extent authorized by State law. The Department is not
19 required to give preference to hunting over other uses of
20 Department-managed lands or over land or water management
21 priorities established by Department regulations or State law.

22 (c) Department land management decisions and actions may
23 not, to the greatest practical extent, result in any net loss
24 of land acreage available for hunting opportunities on
25 Department-managed lands that exists on the effective date of
26 this Act.

27 (d) By October 1 of each year, the Director shall submit to
28 the General Assembly a written report describing:

29 (1) the acreage administered by the Department that has
30 been closed during the previous year to recreational
31 hunting and the reasons for the closures; and

32 (2) the acreage administered by the Department that, in
33 order to comply with subsection (c), was opened to
34 recreational hunting to compensate for those acreage
35 closed under paragraph (1).