

## RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

WHEREAS, the mission of the Board of Wildlife Resources is to **conserve** populations and habitats for present and future generations, **connect** the public to wildlife through outdoor recreational activities, and **protect** people and property by promoting safe outdoor recreation and resolution of human-wildlife conflicts, with hunting being a vital component in achieving all three aspects of said mission; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's hunters are valued constituents, having worked together with others to establish the Department of Wildlife Resources, and, to this day, contribute substantially to the Department's funding through license purchases and other funding connected to their purchases of outdoor equipment; and

WHEREAS, the Board, in recognition of the important contributions of Virginia's hunters to achieving the Department's mission, works diligently to protect the constitutional right of these constituents to hunt and harvest game in a manner consistent with contemporary values that foster and maintain this constitutional right; and

WHEREAS, deer hunting using dogs is an important hunting tradition in the Commonwealth, enjoyed by tens of thousands of Virginians annually, contributing to local economies, and helping the Department meet its deer management objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Board has a vested interest in the continuation of deer hunting using dogs in the Commonwealth in the years to come; and

WHEREAS, the Board also recognizes the need for all citizens to respect the rights of landowners throughout the Commonwealth, by virtue of their real property interest and in the interest of preserving longstanding traditions of legal hunting for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's population continues to grow, and, with increasing suburbanization, hunter/landowner interactions will continue to increase, with a need for mutual respect for the interests of all parties; and

WHEREAS, deer hunting with dogs has been the subject of significant discussion, and, in some cases, legislation during recent years, as well as two studies by the Department as directed by the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board has heard from various interests regarding both the importance of the opportunity to hunt deer using dogs and conflicts with landowners that have arisen in various instances; and

WHEREAS, the most effective means of avoiding and resolving conflicts are, and always will be, constructive relationships and dialogue among individuals, hunt clubs, organizations, and the Department; and

WHEREAS, the above being noted, the Board, in an effort to achieve greater harmony among various constituencies, desires to state its position on a matter concerning a potential amendment to the Code of Virginia pertaining to deer hunting with dogs, and also to give direction to the Director on two initiatives that the Department can undertake, all believed to be in the best interests of hunters, landowners, and the general public for the long-term preservation of deer hunting using dogs;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Wildlife Resources:

1. The Board supports an amendment to §3.2-6531, which exempts dogs engaged in lawful hunting from the requirement to wear collars with an affixed dog license tag, to require that dogs engaged in deer hunting wear collars with the owner's name and contact information attached.
2. The Board directs the development of a dog hunting ethics module to be included in the Department's Hunter Education Program and encourages engagement with the hunting community on the development of such module.
3. The Board directs the review of dog field trial permits issued for foxhound field trials and the development of recommendations to be brought to the Board at a future meeting no later than one year from this date as to any revisions to permit conditions that will assist in ensuring that the integrity of these events is preserved, that intentional running of deer during these events is prohibited, and that rights of owners of adjoining lands are respected, and encourages the engagement with the field trial community on the development of any revisions.

ADOPTED this 28th day of June, 2021.