

Public Comments

Deer License Allocation

Jack Dokken

Pierre SD

Comment:

If this proposal passes, you will see deer hunters hunt other states for the chance at harvesting additional bucks. Many hunters have no interest in killing doe because it weakens their deer heard. So, us hunters that don't believe in eating beef, or any meat not processed by ourselves will hunt other states. Hunters that utilize both sides of the MO River will be saddened if this proposal passes.

James Stanton

218 8Th St. Nw Watertown SD

oldmanstanton@yahoo.com

Comment:

As I write this comment I have just come from a meeting of local folks complaining about the proposed changes to Deer license drawing changes. I fully support the changes as it will help in many folks getting their first preference license for an any deer tag without waiting numerous years to do so. Several changes I would like to further see would include the following: Establish a limit on the number of "any deer" archery tags for residents, and limit the number of non-resident tags for non-resident applicants to 8% based on SD having so much federal property. Archery hunters seem to believe that they are entitled to an "any deer" tag for archery each year and then also want to receive additional tags for "any deer" in other muzzleloader or rifle seasons. Archery hunters in 2018 receive a period of 4 months to pursue their "any deer", therefore they should be complacent in receiving just that ONE any deer tag. I currently have six years preference on muzzleloader ST1 license and am more than a bit tiffed on archery hunters feeling they are entitled to a license each year. They are more than entitled to their method of hunting, I am entitled to mine, but we should all be entitled on an equal basis. I also have two years preference for a east river rifle tag which I will probably be awarded this year. I really don't need to have two "any deer" tags in the event I am also drawn for the muzzleloader tag, but I have to keep applying as I don't know if I will receive both, one, or none.

Why not simplify the system and have each individual hunter prioritize their preference to a single "any deer" tag. If you want archery you get to hunt for 4 months for your trophy, if you choose muzzleloader your get the last season and one month to hunt for your trophy, if you want to hunt with a centerfire rifle you get about two weeks, with three weekends to harvest your trophy. In a perfect world everybody would receive their ONE preference tag. Because we don't live in a perfect world and no doubt some folks will not receive their ONE preference tag. Any remaining "any deer tags" go to a second draw for those listing a second choice.

Unsuccessful applicants would naturally receive a preference point for the following year. The major change I am promoting is that NO ONE APPLICANT will be allowed to draw more than one preference "any deer" tag. This same applicant might get lucky and draw additional "any deer" tags in a second or subsequent drawings, but only after applicants that had not yet received an "any deer" tag. Naturally whatever system you come up with is never going to be perfect and their will always be controversy with it. My feelings are purely based on parity of one hunter to another hunter receiving their ONE PREFERENCE RELATED "ANY DEER" TAG. I don't care with what weapon they choose to hunt with, I don't care if they want West or East river, what I do want is equal access on a relatively level playing field in gaining a license.

Jeff Nelson

Parker SD

Jlnelson11478@gmail.com

Comment:

I am writing you today to voice my opinion about the 2018 Deer Tag allocation proposal. I decided to look into the commission's reason for drawing up said proposal. My findings are alarming and upsetting. You are trying to "fix" something that is not broken. You have decided to take away opportunities for our residents of South Dakota by giving them only one chance at a tag and opening up more opportunities for non-residents. You decided to listen to only the people who apply for one tag every year instead of the people who spend the most money on preference points and licenses, the ones who try to get multiple tags every year! Little do the ones who apply for only one tag know their chance of drawing that tag only increases by less than 20% on average depending on the county. Not only that when a tag does not get drawn in the first round in your proposal in gets pushed back to the second round where a non-resident can apply for it with a better chance than that of a tax paying resident who wanted the tag in the first place. You are only trying to help a small number of the hunters in our great state. Your proposal is a huge step backwards for the outdoor community that brings so much money to our economy. I feel as if you are trying to over-regulate our resources. Deer numbers are fine, tag allocation system is fine so why do the hunters that buy more than one tag have to be victims? Not to mention the proposal negatively affects the more important thing, the memories our residents of South Dakota make on these outdoor excursions. Please listen to the people and reconsider your proposal. I recommend you yourself access social media (i.e. Facebook) and read many of the comments left by our hunters. It sure seems like a majority are against this proposal. You may be allowing more hunters, but less hunting for those of us who have been loyal and willing to support the GFP by buying multiple tags per year. I hope your reasoning behind all of this is not monetary based, but I won't get into that on this email, as you should be reading the other emails that are being sent to you in opposition of this proposal.

Scott Andral

Salem SD

scott.andral@k12.sd.us

Comment:

I did not start Deer hunting till 2005. I started out East River then in 2009 began hunting West River and have hunted both sides of the State since. Going out West is my get away a time and i get to spend with my brother in laws. East River is my hunt i do on my own but soon will take my daughter out with me to Hunt. I wold hate to see hunters like me have to choose between the East and West hunt. Not all years i get both tags and not all years i shoot 2 Deer. Actually i have only harvested 2 Deer in 2 seasons since 2009. I have always been proud of where i live and have an opportunity to hunt. Please leave the current Draw structure the way it is. Concerned citizen and hunter.

Casey Jorgensen

Sioux Falls SD

casey@baeteforseth.com

Comment:

I don't think Deer Hunters should be forced to choose one favorite deer season and apply for that, it should be left up to luck of the DRAW!! Please leave it alone.

Mark Peterson
Aberdeen SD

Comment:

This is a scheme to get more non-resident tags open for pay hunting. The system is fine the way it is and the department misrepresented the numbers in the previous meetings. More people by pure numbers were against this change when you add up the meeting numbers and the online numbers yet you still go ahead with this plan. Your job is to do the will of the people, not the few that are trying to sell and make money off pay hunting.

Josh Jutting
Watertown SD

Comment:

I think if this goes through sdgfp will lose a portion of the resident hunters that do apply for all of the firearm seasons

Bruce Gloege
Brandon SD
bruceg@perspective-inc.com

Comment:

I strongly oppose the changing of the deer drawing structure. Please leave as-is.

Martin Hesby

Brookings SD

Martinh@averyoutdoors.com

Comment:

I am writing you to request your support of resident deer hunters asking you to vote for NO CHANGE to the existing deer season structure in our great state of SD. Secondly, I want to put a spin on GFP data for a minute (since their presentation is all spin, to help them get what they want, here is another perspective). The sole reason we are even in any sort of dilemma is due to GFP's own miss management of the deer resource (over harvesting doe populations for about a decade, all across our state), coupled with a natural disease (EHD) that killed deer at extreme levels over the past 5 years, along with the introduction of the Mt Lion in the Black hills (remember, Black Hills tags were automatic for decades until the Mt Lion reduced the number of deer and elk in the Hills dramaticall). GFP would argue these factors are not as extreme as it sounds, however hunters and landowners in the field would tell you otherwise. These 3 factors are a fact, and GFP moved too slowly to reduce deer tags when EHD struck, and continued to over harvest deer in almost every county in our state to finance their capitol budget (When they use to offer 2,500 overall tags, excluding archery and youth, in Kingsbury County alone, and now offer about 500, it is of course harder to draw)! Common sense needs to prevail here.. My point is that instead of changing around the existing structure that we have enjoyed for decades, focus on rebuilding our precious deer population and in some cases do not let anyone harvest doe's for a few years to help the population build back up. We don't need a new structure, we need to improve the population to the levels of 10 years ago, which would provide more opportunity for all. Hunters all understand it is hard to draw due to the decrease of deer population, so the existing structure works. Don't screw up something that isn't broken, rather focus on actually "managing" the resource, not revenue generated from tags to run the department. GFP's entire proposal is them waiving the white flag on trying to improve and increase overall deer numbers. Their data showing deer hunters declining, along with deer hunter draw success declining over the past 10 years, is in direct correlation to their lack of deer management all the while our deer numbers have been decimated. Of course the graphs will show it is harder to draw a tag, when GFP finally started reducing total tags in an effort to actually manage the resource, not capitol revenue. Problem is that the reduction in tags was about 5 years too late, then EHD hit twice in a 3 yer span. Also, they are sneaking in 8% of all tags going to non-residents! In the fine print of course! NO NON-RESIDENT should EVER draw a single deer tag over a RESIDENT hunter, EVER! This proposal is wreck-less, not what the resident hunters want, decreases opportunity for residents, and is a bad deal for deer hunters overall. Please support the resident hunter here, read all the public comments, and hold GFP accountable! Don't disappoint residents, like what happened with the Non-Resident Waterfowl issue (that was shameful). They have taken more and more opportunity away from resident hunters in this great state over the past decade, please help put an end to that! The only thing more extreme GFP could do is include archery tags into this mix and limit deer hunters to only 1 buck tag... My fear is that with this change if it gets pushed through by GFP, we are only 1 quick step away from that reality.... And I don't like the way that book reads. Sincerely and respectfully!

Merris Miller

Lennox SD

coyotedoc3@hotmail.com

Comment:

support

Warren Schneider

Sioux Falls SD

warren@kouriinsurance.com

Comment:

I oppose the changes you want to make to the system

Dave Deboer

Sioux Falls SD

srddd@sio.midco.net

Comment:

I don't see how the new system is an improvement on what we currently have. if its not broke why fix it.

Justin Mettler

Sioux Falls SD

mettler18@hotmail.com

Comment:

I do not want to see a change in the way deer tags/drawings are held.

Jerry Hout

Sioux Falls SD

houtjk@gmail.com

Comment:

I would like the present deer drawing system remain as it is.

Jeff Berg

Sioux Falls SD

jeberg@smithfield.com

Comment:

I oppose changing of the deer drawing structure for South Dakota, No change Please.

Mike Swanson

Sioux Falls SD

Swany5218@hotmail.com

Comment:

oppose

Kevin Severy

Harrisburg SD

ksevery@winsupplyinc.com

Comment:

I oppose changing of the deer drawing structure for South Dakota, No change Please...

Larry Prokop

Sioux Falls SD

Buzzgsp@gmail.com

Comment:

I oppose the proposed changes for the current lottery system

David Carda

Yankton SD

davidcarda@kolbergpioneer.com

Comment:

I would like the current application process to stay in place. I apply for multiple seasons and would not like to pick just one. I'm OK with not getting an ER deer season every year since I usually get one of the other seasons. I like the variety we currently get with the current process. Please leave it as is.

Thank you,
Dave Carda
605-660-6820

Andy Vandel

Pierre SD

andyvandel@gmail.com

Comment:

I would like to express my support for the proposal to restructure the deer license drawing. I believe that after the first couple years of the new system people will realize they are getting the tags they want more often. Since the preference point system will remain for each tag type, it will still allow people to get different high demand tags just not in the same year. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Andy Vandel
308 N. Johnson Ave.
Pierre, SD

Darrel Reinke

Ft. Pierre SD

Darrel@reinkegray.com

Comment:

oppose

Tim Brown

Watertown SD

Fowlhunter3@hotmail.com

Comment:

I don't agree with the new allocation of this proposal allocating 8% more deer tags to non residents that used to be residents. I also think that residents shouldn't have to choose between hunting west river or east river. They are two very different hunts and species of deer to hunt. And it is one of the reasons that many of us live in this state to enjoy the diversity of hunting that this state offers residents. It's not right to take that away from the residents of this great state.

Joe Hulscher

Colton SD

jhulscher@sio.midco.net

Comment:

I oppose changing of the deer drawing structure for South Dakota. I feel it is fair way of managing our deer population. Please NO changes. Thanks

Earl Wilson

Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

Just heard of the possible changes. I only apply for one season a year but I'm still against any change to the system that is in place now. My sons like to have the chance to hunt east and west river each year. Why limit their hunting?

Randy Kludt

Winner SD

Randy.Kludt@k12.sd.us

Comment:

LEAVE AS IS

Thomas Wollman

Sioux Falls SD

trwsfjd@yahoo.com

Comment:

I am opposed to the proposed modification to the current deer license structure.

Brian Phinney
Mitchell SD
bushgrizz@gmail.com

Comment:

oppose

Phillip Schroeder
Pierre SD
phillip.perry.schroeder@gmail.com

Comment:

From my personal experiences over the past few months, social media responses, and petitions being circulated it is evident that there is a considerable amount of opposition to this proposal. I myself am opposed to the proposal as well and believe that the gfp commission and related parties should take the public's concerns with this proposal seriously. The increased regulation into the sd deer season is pushing many hunters away. It feels as if the gfp is trying to push this proposal through, even though there is evident opposition at a large scale across the state.

Mike Kerrigan
Canistota SD
bradley370@gmail.com

Comment:

oppose

Joseph Bullert
Sioux Falls SD
JoeyBullert@gmail.com

Comment:

I see one reason for this being pushed through and it's money. It's not about conservation, sport men or anything else. This is 100% money. The commissioners are trying to raise as much money as possible for the guides and the state. The reality is this will only benefit outfitters or out of staters who have to pay more MONEY! Get real here. I hunt and fish in Webster. I hunt predominately private land but I backpack hunt out west. The last thing I want is running into more out of staters. This will also DEplete the game. Do you people not get this? This is the single biggest mistake and form of corruption that I've seen. Do the right thing and stop this money hungry scheme.

Greg Schweiss
Rapid City SD

Comment:

Since I look forward to a Family (wife, kids, siblings) West River Deer Hunt every year, I would need to put that down as my first choice, meaning it would be highly unlikely that I could ever draw a Buck tag for the Black Hills season going forward. That would be highly disappointing to me and would eliminate one of my favorite hunting experiences.

Tim Tollefsrud
Pierre SD
pheasanttaildesigns@q.com

Comment:

I support this change 100%. Should do the same with the elk application process asap.

Sara Heil
Hill City SD
hersmr@hotmail.com

Comment:

I am not sure why these changes have been proposed or which hunters have been approached in regards to these changes. No one that we know supports the suggested changes. Leave the seasons as they are. It is ridiculous that these changes have been given serious consideration. Love that hunting is going to become more restrictive...let me explain, Wyoming is going to be gaining a lot of hunting income that South Dakota could use. So go for it, Wyoming, here we come.

Jeffrey Sorensen
Viborg SD
sorensenfam01@gmail.com

Comment:

Please leave the process as it is currently.

Justin Brown
Freeman SD
Browner1387@icloud.com

Comment:

Please do not change the draw structures, all you are going to do is let more out of state hunters in, and with that making more private land owners made with gates left open and more trespassing.

Rick Kline

Yankton SD

rakline@vyn.midco.net

Comment:

If only 11% of applicants apply both east and west river deer, why are we even considering a new proposal. If it's not broke don't fix it. I oppose the new changes.

Aaron Hettinger

White Lake SD

aaronhettinger1@gmail.com

Comment:

oppose

Rita Duck

Faith SD

vrduck@goldenwest.net

Comment:

leave as is!!!! don't fix what is not broken

Dylan Cavanaugh

Aberdeen SD

DC571@ABE.MIDCO.NET

Comment:

I oppose the lumping of all 6 deer licenses together in one draw. I would be in favor of the middle ground proposal that lumped ERD, WRD and the Black Hills into 1 draw. It's my opinion that Custer, Refuge, and Muzzleloader should be left separate in their own draws as they are special hunts/units.

Joe Denison

Arlington SD

qaqiwdrd@outlook.com

Comment:

I think the state is getting greedy at this in this change and I oppose the change

Andrew Schuman

Geddes SD

andy_schuman@hotmail.com

Comment:

This will drive down the number of deer. Instead of having the option to be selective in his harvest with having multiple seasons, guys will only have one tag and most likely fill with whatever walks by further degrading the quality of deer in this state. Not to mention killing the tradition in our state of being able on a hunting trip each year. Most guys will chose to stay close to home. Just seems like a push for East river non-resident tags and tax revenue. Leave it alone.

Chris Gerber

Delmont SD

chrisxfpsgerber@gmail.com

Comment:

Leave it alone!

Jared Holsing

Sioux Falls SD

jholsing@sio.midco.net

Comment:

This limits individuals from getting a license. It does not help get licenses for the applicants preferred license type. This proposal needs to be dropped, it is 100% the wrong thing to do for the residents of SD. No mention of how land owner preference is handled. It just seems very thrown together and not thought through.

Bradley Bond

Rapid City SD

Bondbassmaster@gmail.com

Comment:

This is a great proposal which will allow hunters the chance to get a tag every year. I am concerned that people can still get unlimited licenses after the 4th drawing.

Ron Laurtsen

Custer SD

Comment:

I have a daughter who is 11 years old and I would like to have a fairer chance for her to get a Black Hills deer tag.

Chris Nelson

Platte SD

pharmco.of.platte@plantpioneer.com

Comment:

If it is not broke don't try to fix it. This proposal would decrease the amount of money that my family and I give to SDGFP by 2/3 I believe that in the end it will cost the SDGFP significantly in lost revenue.

Blake Fliehs

Stratford SD

Blake.Fliehs@gmail.com

Comment:

I strongly oppose this change to the draw system. The current lottery system, where you build preference points and eventually get the tag you want, works. I only see the proposed method helping out of state applicants. I think keeping tags in the residents hands, the people who take care of the ground that produces the food and habitat for the deer should be first and foremost.

Joshua Nygaard

Beresford SD

nygaardlivestock@hotmail.com

Comment:

Just leave it alone it's been that way forever no point in changing it and giving everyone more restrictions on what they can apply for

Cody Vostad

Canton SD

cjvostad@gmail.com

Comment:

My family and I basically live off of deer meat. We apply for every season we can every year; west river, east river, black hills deer, archery deer, muzzle loader deer, elk, antelope. If we couldn't only apply for one of them the first draw then I'm afraid we wouldn't be able to get as many tags because they'll all be gone by the 3rd draw. We love going out and hunting in South Dakota and all getting together. The more times the better. This year so far we have antelope, archery, and west river deer. Please don't do this proposed change. I do not agree with it at all.

Jason Larkin

Sioux Falls SD

SDBIGBUCKS@GMAIL.COM

Comment:

Deer Allocation. This change would be detrimental to all the resident deer hunters in the state. To have to pick one tag between all the units is the dumbest thing I've ever heard of. Buying preference points for counties you don't hunt one year

John Pfitzer

Huron SD

j_pfitzer@yahoo.com

Comment:

I live in Beadle county. I do not hunt in Beadle county because I go back "home" to Walworth county to hunt east river deer and Corson County to hunt west river deer. I do not believe the new policy is going to benefit me and my kids. The Any Deer tag in Walworth county is a highly sought after tag in Walworth county and I believe that is due to most of the applicants for that tag live in Walworth county. They will apply for that tag before they apply for a west river tag. And the same probably goes for most counties. I am perfectly fine waiting a few years for a Walworth county Any Deer tag because I can currently apply for a tag in corson county in the first drawing and get a west river tag. With the new system, I won't be able to do that, and I may not get any tags. I do not believe this system has been completely thought through and I have spoken to a lot of other hunters about it and none of them are happy. I have not spoken with one person who likes the proposal. If you are making things better for the hunters, I should be able to find one person who is happy with the changes. I cannot. Many of these people have said they have contacted the SDGFP about their opposition to the new structure. They all say the same thing about the game and fish response. There is none. We all believe this is a done deal and game and fish is just going through the motions to make everyone think they did their due diligence. This whole thing is a farce and probably motivated by political money somewhere.

Kyle Gutormson

Brookings SD

Kylegutormson@hotmail.com

Comment:

I believe the tag system is fine the way it is and doesn't need to be altered, I hunt east, west, and black hills deer every year, or every year I draw a tag. Should make a law to increase the maturity age on deer allowed to be harvested. It would increase the size of bucks and help the deer herds by only harvest the mature bucks and maybe add more doe tags. Deer are born at a 1:1 doe to buck ratio, many places in the state the ratio is closer to 6:1 and the does need to be managed to keep our herds healthy.

Michael Cook
Rapid City SD

Comment:

Please do not change the deer drawing system !!!!! Unless you plan to greatly increase the amount of tags allocated to each unit you will not solve anything. Under your proposal An individual would be be luck to get one tag every other yr. There would NEVER be any preferred tags available in the leftover drawings. Or as a second choice for that matter. I say again DON'T CHANGE THE DRAW!!!

Craig Haiar
Mitchell SD
chair270@gmail.com

Comment:

Do not cater to a few land owners that provide guided hunts. There is not a problem with the current process.

Dan Trudeau
Jefferson SD
Tffi_@hotmail.com

Comment:

I'm not sure why this is being proposed. I've been hunting both east and west river deer for more than 20 years, and even though I'm not always able to draw my preferred tag I've never not had the opportunity to hunt deer somewhere. I think it needs to stay the same. I'm yet to talk to another hunter who thinks the proposal is a good idea. If you want a true opinion of the people have a vote for all hunters in South Dakota not just the people who will have the time and means to attend one of your meetings. Send an absentee ballot to everyone!

David Bonen
Hosmer SD
bonen@valleytel.net

Comment:

support

Dustin Christopherson
Pierre SD
dustin.christopherson@sdhefa.com

Comment:

It is already difficult to obtain all the deer licenses we would like to get in a year with the exception of archery under the current structure. The new structure is basically asking to take some of the deer licenses from the serious hunters that are there for your management purposes and revenue purposes year in and year out so that other residents and non residents can "give it a whirl" if they feel the itch. I personally don't care for it.

Chris Podoll
Columbia SD
ccpodoll@nrctv.com

Comment:

I do not support any changes to the current deer license draw system.

Jason Engbrecht
Pierre SD
Jengbrecht@pie.midco.net

Comment:

Horrible idea It is a ridiculous idea. Lots of SD sportsmen have worked hard for years to maintain relationships with landowners to hunt big West river and East river. If you allow sportsman to hunt only one season it will promote paid deer hunting in sd.

Andrew Krier
Harrisburg SD
andrewckrier@gmail.com

Comment:

I fully oppose the proposed change for tag allocation. I believe it is a slap in the face to all South Dakota residents, especially with the number of people opposing this and you guys forcing it down our throats. The majority wants no change and yet

Paul Pierson
Belle Fourche SD
ppierson@spearfishfp.com

Comment:

support

James Nelson
Rapid City SD
James.nelsoncb@gmail.com

Comment:

Majority of the people don't want this to happen. You should really listen to the people on what we want and not just on what you commissioners want. A few of you decide this major change instead of thousands who oppose this is just embarrassing.

Jon Haverly
Sioux Falls SD
haverly@sio.midco.net

Comment:

This is a solution in search of a problem. It seeks to impose complication in a process that works just fine as it is. I can tolerate some disappointment in draw results and others should be able to as well without sniveling about it.

Matthew Kuchta
Irene SD
kuchta82@hotmail.com

Comment:

Leave the lottery system we have in place alone. There is nothing wrong with the way it is. Keep your money grubbing fingers out of it!!!!

David Lyon
Hudson SD
dlyon@alliancecom.net

Comment:

Like many, I hunt both East and West River. Under the current system I enter two choices for each and I'm done. With the proposed system I need to keep submitting to be in the subsequent draws (if I understand correctly). Additionally, knowing when you can and cannot draw is a bit confusing and I see you getting a lot more inquiries about why people aren't allowed to be included in leftover draws.

Brian Aker
Sioux Falls SD
Briandton@wat.modco.net

Comment:

We need to combine bow rifle and muzzle into 1 drawing. Hunters need to choose a season rather than being able to get a permit for each season. 1 hunter 1 deer regardless of how it is hunted.

Mike Rogers
Sturgis SD
captainmikerogers@gmail.com

Comment:

I support this proposal however I don't think they need to eliminate the Special Buck Tag. Why is GFP taking away Special Buck Permits. These affect no one, only help land owner manage their herd. They don't affect the average hunter in drawing a tag, you can only hunt private property with permission from the land owner. Why take these out of the equation?

Kyle Rozeboom
Harrisburg SD

Comment:

I'm sure nobody will read this but I cannot find any benefit in this change. It seems as if it is made to appease out of staters and people who live in the hills. The "stats" that say 80% only apply for 1 season is ridiculous everyone I know that hunts applies for WR, ER, BH, and MZ. This will hurt the younger generation of hunters and push them away from keeping the traditions alive. I'm sure it is all a new skeem for the state to make money off its outdoorsman.

Tim Washburn
Sioux Falls SD
krisco7479@aol.com

Comment:

I am 71 years old and have hunted decades. The draw system that we have in place right now has worked well. Please do not change. I enjoy the opportunity to apply for more than one tag at a time.

Rob Bowden
Colman SD
rob.bowden18@gmail.com

Comment:

I attended one of the meetings in Sioux Falls on this topic and the a strong majority of the group was opposed to this change. I think the way it's being presented is misleading and one sided. Myself and my family to include MANY extended family members hunt 2 or more of the regular deer seasons. Submitting applications in the current method is fast, easy and can be done all at once. The proposed changes are futile efforts which will cause more issues than they will solve. There are many hunters, those who pour exponentially more dollars into fees and licenses and the related economic impact through local commerce, who don't have a preference by season....but PER SEASON! If people choose to apply for a season or unit that has marginal success rates, they do so knowingly. I love hunting the hills and I know I will only get a tag about every 5 years....but I am not willing to give up a chance at all my other seasons to slightly increase my odds....however I like to still have a chance at drawing where I would not under the new system. Would it not make more sense to offer those who only want to hunt 1 unit or one season to forfeit the opportunity to apply in the other seasons by purchasing an any season preference point? This way they can pool all preference points toward any deer season/unit they choose while still giving those who hunt multiple seasons the opportunity to do so with similar odds as we have today? Essentially, rather than pooling the seasons together for draw, you are pooling preference points together. This would have a much more profound impact on the issue you are attempting to remedy because rather than simply shift the number of applicants around with a minimal net result, you will effectively change the number of applicants through purchase of preference vs applying.

Alex Hughes

Groton SD

alex.hughes@jacks.sdstate.edu

Comment:

I am opposed to this change in the deer licence system. I would rather hunt family land east river but still enjoy hunting west river and muzzle loader. If this goes though I will no longer apply for the black hills, west river, or muzzle loader.

Shane Voss

Hurley SD

shane.voss@k12.sd.us

Comment:

I'm a life long South Dakota resident/avid hunter. I'm not in favor of this proposal. I believe it's going to limit South Dakota residents and open the door for more out of state deer hunters.

Daniel Buresh

Madison SD

Daniel.Buresh@gmail.com

Comment:

The idea that the deer allocation needs to be changed is not being driven by sportsman who feel the need to change it. There are years i don't get any tags and years that I get multiple. It should remain as is. The system isn't broken so don't fix it. Thanks

David Walford

Flandreau SD

dwalford1@mediacombb.net

Comment:

Oppose

Dan Knust

Ipswich SD

dan.knust@yahoo.com

Comment:

I enjoy hunting throughout South Dakota. I hunt mostly all public ground. I have worked my preference points out so that I can hunt at least 1 of the major seasons per year (Antelope, BH, WR & ER). I accept I may not get an ER tag but will usually draw one of the other tags. I have 3 sons under the age of 12 who love to hunt (or go along). Changing how we give licenses wont change if they hunt or not...how we manage the game we have will! Lets spend more time talking about ways to increase our pheasant population and get our deer herd back to a healthy number!!!! CRP!!!!

Alex Heilman

Sioux Falls SD

alexheilman31@gmail.com

Comment:

This proposal only limits our opportunities in this state no change is necessary.

Daniel Klosterman

Madison SD

Daniel.klosterman@sdstate.edu

Comment:

Please do NOT approve of this new tag allocation. Took me 6 years to get my east river rifle tag (lake county) which is absolute nonsense. I also love hunting the black hills. Best revenue you can have is keeping your IN STATE HUNTERS hunting here

Allison Oleson

Lennox SD

Comment:

This feels like an unnecessary change to limit in state Hunter's tags

Brian Bohlmann

Yankton SD

Bjbohlmann@outlook.com

Comment:

Many people I know (hunting enthusiasts) are opposed to restructuring the deer draw. Please listen to us.
Thank you Brian Bohlmann

Mark Maggs
Springfield SD
mlm5061@yahoo.com

Comment:

Currently in South Dakota we have the opportunity to play our odds on drawing our deer tags. A guy knows that in BH county he will likely need 3 or 4 years preference to draw a tag. He also knows that he can pretty much be guaranteed a tag in a county like Meade or Gregory. He knows that if he wants to hunt antelope in Fall River county he's going to need 2 preference points. You get the picture, all the draw statistic information is available to him online. With this information the outdoorsman is able to decide what units he is going to apply for and which units he's going to purchase preference points in. He can not only plan this year's hunts, but also his hunts over the next several years and ensure that he's able to be in the field every year. It also offers the opportunity to hunt deer in 3 very different environments, each offering it's own unique set of challenges and experiences. This alone makes SD one of the greatest places to live for a Sportsman. By changing the allocation process you are throwing ALL the drawing statistics out the window and limiting the opportunities for sportsman to get in the field with family and friends. It's a shameful proposal and I will voice my opposition of it to anyone who will listen. Please reconsider changing the way we draw our deer tags. Feel free to email me back if you wish to defend your proposal.

Dan Waldman
Aberdeen SD
dwaldman_87@hotmail.com

Comment:

I oppose this proposal. This proposal is only going to take away opportunity for residents by limiting what seasons we can apply for and when, while allowing more non-residents to get tags in the 4th drawing. I feel this is what the commission is going for. There are other ways to free up tags for residents, like eliminating landowner preference for the General drawings (ERD, BHD, and WRD). This would free up 50% of the tags in every unit. A landowner wanting to hunt their land can still apply for the landowner any deer tag and the free doe tags. A small change to the LO season would need to be changed to allow landowners to hunt other private land with permission. This would allow landowners to hunt with friends and neighbors on their land. Maybe implementing some sort of incentives for landowners to improve habitat would cause the numbers of deer to increase thereby allowing more tags to be issued, which would increase drawing success rates. A reasonable increase in tag fees and preference point fees could help fund this. GFP could also consider starting the ERD, WRD, and BHD all on the same Saturday. This would not help drawing success but it would take pressure off public land. Again I oppose this proposal as written.

Will Hettinger
Pierre SD
wdhettinger@earthlink.net

Comment:

It has been reported 46% of hunters support the changes. 54% DO NOT. The system works now, leave it alone.

Tim Melton
Salem SD
tdm63@hotmail.com

Comment:

If muzzle loader is included, WHY not put bow hunting in there? They shouldn't be able to get multiple licenses.

Scott Rosenkranz
Sturgis SD
rosies727th@hotmail.com

Comment:

It is my understanding that it will be a benefit as you would now only have one first choice, minus archery. You couldn't have a first choice in both East and West River plus a blackpowder as well. I have not gotten drawn in the past and then talked to another who got both Black Hills and East River first time draw which has openers on different weekends so they can hunt both. If this is true I support it.

Matthew Krier
Sioux Falls SD
hitnug@gmail.com

Comment:

I am opposed to the changes. The way the tags are drawn now are not ideal but the proposed changes would be worse. I would propose adding more preference point groups in the draw or even change where if you drew a buck tag last year you have to wait a year to apply for a buck tag again

Matt Baumgarn
Webster SD
mbaumgarn@hotmail.com

Comment:

I do not agree with changing the way SD draws for deer tags. The way it was and has been has been working well for most. Some people that complain will complain no matter what you do to try and change it. I also don't get a tag every year but know that is part of the lottery and maybe a person could look at other units where successes are better. I feel changing this will only hinder SD and this is one step to pay to hunt for outfitters and guides. This will take the ability for the kid that grows up without land to hunt from being able to ever experience the great outdoors and the comradery of the hunts. Please leave this the same for future generation.

Danny McLaughlin

Brookings SD

Dcmclaughlin80@gmail.com

Comment:

This whole bar individuals from being able to go home and hunt with their family. Individuals who grow up West River but go to school East River or have a job on the East River Side will have to decide about being able to be successful in their draw to hunt one maybe two weekends on the ground they grew up on or having to just not hunt with their family so that they have an opportunity to possibly go out hunting a few more times because they only have to travel a short distance from where they work or go to school. this just like paying for preference points is going to deteriorate the family and comradere aspect of hunting.

Kevin Coon

Hartford SD

KGCOON@WINAIR.COM

Comment:

I oppose changing of the deer drawing structure for South Dakota, No change Please!

Joe Arbach

Hoven SD

joe.arbachins@venturecomm.net

Comment:

Please leave as is.

Shane Lillebo

Rapid City SD

lilleboshane@gmail.com

Comment:

oppose

Clayton Larson

Selby SD

cmlarson@venturecomm.net

Comment:

Why do you feel this will help anything. Leave the deer drawings as they are or people will start leaving the state to hunt who are actually residents. It seems the residents are the ones who suffer. GFP will do anything for an out of stater. I have stuck up for the GFP for a long time but it is getting pretty hard these days. As someone said to me once, let them start managing prairie dogs so we can get rid of them too.

Fred Hantke
Harford SD
fhantke@msn.com

Comment:

I think I should be able to have an east and west river tag prior to non residents.

Darren Haar
Rapid City SD

Comment:

support

Bryan David
Harrisburg SD
bmd1881@gmail.com

Comment:

This system seems unnecessary, its focus is entirely on hunter numbers. If there are 100 participating hunters in the state changing the system is not going to get magically change the number of participating hunters to 200. Hunting is on the decline and has nothing to do with the current system but everything to do with today's society,

Darcy Kuyper
Platte SD
darcykuyper@gmail.com

Comment:

support

Justin Scheff
Montrose SD
scheffj@yahoo.com

Comment:

add bow season too, with all the cameras and the abilities of bows they need to be add too the drawing process. Why should bow hunters be guaranteed a buck tag every year

Wyatt Torticill

Baltic SD

Wyatttorticill@yahoo.com

Comment:

support

Adam Golay

Sioux Falls SD

adamgolay@yahoo.com

Comment:

There is no reason to change the deer allocation. The majority of hunters do not want this changed according to the survey gfp did. 57% don't want it changed which includes me. I absolutely do not want it changed. So why change it for the 43% that might want it changed. This will cause the gfp to lose money too since they won't sell as many preference points because you won't be able to use them since you can only hunt for 1 buck per year under the proposal. I won't buy any preference points anymore if this passes so you will lose that extra \$15-\$20 year from me & im sure many more hunters. Where is gfp going to make up for that lost revenue? The best option is to not change deer allocation & leave it the way we currently have it. Changing it doesn't even make it easier to get a tag necessarily. It might help with west river around rapid city or black hills but that guy applying for moody county every year will still only get a tag every 2-3 years. This solves nothing for east river & a matter of fact it might make it even harder to get an east river tag since that's the tag that most east river people will choose. People thinking they'll get their minnehaha county tag every year if this passes are being lied to by gfp, this change won't make east river any easier to draw.

Raymond Mclaughlin

Custer SD

ray.mclaughlin@state.sd.us

Comment:

support

David Potts

Toronto SD

david.c.potts@centurylink.com

Comment:

this does affect preference points as I will no longer apply for east river deer if it means that I cannot apply for west river deer. there will be no leftover tags for my preferred east river county by statistics. so any points I have will be unused. this whole thing is a terrible idea and no one I have spoke to has one good thing to say about it. you are only appeasing the people who do not want to look for new hunting grounds and only hunt one season. what of the thousands who apply for all deer seasons and are willing to travel (hotels-food-gas-etc) to do so. look at the big picture. you stand to lose much more than you gain making big city hunters happy.

James Vis

Sioux Falls SD

jyv12480@hotmail.com

Comment:

You guys are doing a great job, thanks for actually trying something different. I fully support the change in drawing tags.

Tyler Fischer

Gettysburg SD

tyler_fischer@hotmail.com

Comment:

Seems as though in-state hunters are going to have to choose 1 season/unit to hunt per year instead of enjoying several opportunities to hunt with different parties in different environments and species. I think it will increase total number of hunters (especially out of state hunter numbers) which will put undo pressure and stress on our landowners. This will lead to MORE trespassing violations statewide which our state shortage of Experienced Conservation Officers will not be able to handle. Please leave the drawings the way they currently are and let preference points choose who gets to hunt where as intended.

Robert Fischer

Hot Springs SD

Sodakbfischer@gmail.com

Comment:

While I'm ok with either east river or west river but not include black hills and black powder

Clint Buchholz

Highmore SD

clintb@venture.coop

Comment:

I don't like the idea that if I draw in first drawing, I can't apply in second drawing. Example so if I want to apply for East River, West River and Black Hills, I draw one of these, my chances of drawing my preferred tag in my second area is slim to none, even in third or fourth draw. It is hard enough in some units to draw anyway, why are you making it more difficult? You are basically pushing everyone that wants to hunt multiple areas into applying for doe tags in their second areas, because that will be the only thing leftover. I could get on board with this if you make 2 changes. First, allow the second application for a different area in second draw. Second, get rid of the units, if you draw an East river tag, you can hunt any county east of the river, unless specified as a separate area. That will ease everyone's mind and probably pass.

Jeff Nugent
Piedmont SD

Comment:

oppose

Daniel Buresh
Madison SD
Daniel.Buresh@gmail.com

Comment:

I wanted to mention that this is going to cause me to lose access to areas i hunt because I am going to lose my group. I hunt with my uncle west river, but he hunts with a different group east river. He is going to pick ER as his first choice so my chances of getting the west river group will be slim to none. Those of us who have different groups for different areas are going to be forced to choose which is most important while dissolving the rest.

Scott Egan
Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

just leave it the way it is. spend more time better managing the game numbers to increase them. that will equal more hunters, more income for GFP

Kalvin Kurtenbach
Mitchell SD
kalvink1492@yahoo.com

Comment:

Please leave the deer season drawings for the next season the same as they have been everyone in my family opposes the new proposal. We do NOT want the way you draw for DEER license to change . Thank you

Roy Petersen
Ft. Pierre SD

Comment:

The draw is not broken, don't try to fix it!!!

Patrick Glasford

Crooks SD

pglasfo@yahoo.com

Comment:

I think this idea is very bad way to handle our deer tags. The current system works fine. I feel like the GFP is gonna do this no matter what and not listen to what the hunters want.

Clark Baker

Sioux Falls SD

clarkbaker27@yahoo.com

Comment:

This is way to complicated. Leave the old system in place. This change is not going to help.

Hunter Sperling

Canistota SD

hrsperl@gmail.com

Comment:

Year in and year out our state screws itself. If we can not get residents of the state their own tags if they apply then we better not be giving tags out to nonresidents. Landowners are being left in the dust on this as well. If someone owns the land and can't draw a tag anymore for their own property they just go kill the deer anyway. What is the reason for making a landowner draw a tag? I could go on and on about these things.

Chayson Hewer

Brandon SD

Chasehewer@gmail.com

Comment:

I think this needs a vote to the public since we are the ones affected by a possible change.

Rocky Rehfeldt

Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

I prefer the current process b/c I think it is a fair way for people to have multiple opportunities to hunt different counties. I am not sure what is attempting to accomplish by this, but appears from my end would decrease overall

Michael Kogelmann

Pierre SD

Comment:

oppose

Jared Bertelsen

Volga SD

jaredbertelsen@yahoo.com

Comment:

Leave it as is I have talked to about 75 people about this and they all say leave it as is I should not have to choose a priority season you are trying to cater to a minority few leave it as is

Cody Hendrix

Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

This proposal reduces or eliminates the possibility of enjoying more than one firearm hunt in a single season (East River and West River for example). Given that, I am firmly against this proposal.

Earl Rider

Watertown SD

Comment:

WHY CHANGE THIS WHEN YOU ALWAYS HAVE DEER LICENSES LEFT IN SOME UNIT EVERY YEAR. THIS SHOULD BE A PUBLIC VOTE NOT DECIDED BY A FEW PEOPLE OF WHICH SOME ARE NOT IN THE FARM COMMUNITY

Jesse Travis

Humboldt SD

Comment:

oppose

Bret Graves

Pierre SD

bcgraves12@gmail.com

Comment:

I am in favor of the proposed changes. Being successful on first choice has declined over the years and I would like a better chance of being successful. I believe that would benefit most applicants, more often.

Leroy Dorale

Tea SD

ldorale@karlsinc.com

Comment:

having only one first chose, will change the number of tags i will apply for

Justin Boynton

Aberdeen SD

boynton.justin@yahoo.com

Comment:

The proposal is penalizing everyone more than it's helping. You want to help keep tags available make landowners get there's through the landowner draw. Otherwise they are on the same playing field as everyone else. No more land owner preference in the regular draw. Also get the west river tag system set like the east river draw. Absolutely no out of state hunters until the 3rd draw. All of us that hunt, fish, and camp and spend money constantly should get first chance at tags. As a land owner that cares for and feeds the wild life and uses the land owner draw to leave tags for the public, I should not have to take a preference point and a second option because tags are set aside for non residents.

Patrick Ballensky

Akaska SD

pcb5591@yahoo.com

Comment:

What the hell is wrong with you people leave things as they are . It will just cost money to change things,but I guess that doesn't concern you people. You don't have enough to do to come up with this crap.

Britt Bruner

Mitchell SD

britt@santel.net

Comment:

Please do NOT change this! Many of us determine which licenses to apply for based on earlier success in drawing a tag. This is a solution looking for a problem. If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Jeremy Wollman

Bonesteel SD

jeremy.wollman@k12.sd.us

Comment:

I hope the GFP can stand strong against all the uneducated hunters that are currently passing petitions around claiming the proposal helps out of state hunters. I wish more hunters would listen instead of fearing all change. The proposal is the better system for all hunters. You have my support.

Mary Sateren

Black Hawk SD

forestglen02@gmail.com

Comment:

We own land in the hills & at Angustora Reservoir. We used to enjoy Thanksgiving each year, deer hunting at Angustora. It has taken me 8 years to get a tag there. At our home, we've been denied 3 years. At what point will you consider limiting the bow hunting licenses to give others a better chance? My husband is 72 years old & it seems rifle hunters are limited & bow hunters get tags all of the time. Thank you for trying to make this better for all...you do a great job.

Lee Kinney

Onida SD

kinneyl@icloud.com

Comment:

Please leave it the way it is.

Tyler Richardson

Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

oppose

Ryan Krempges

Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

Do NOT change the current draw system for deer.

Wayne Lauck
Pierre SD

Comment:

support

Kirk Steege
Volga SD
ksteege@itctel.com

Comment:

I feel there is nothing wrong with the system we have in place.

Dean Houser
Dell Rapids SD

Comment:

Leave it the same

Dale Skoog
Milbank SD
dickskoog99@gmail. Com

Comment:

It appears that non-residents will be able to participate in the first drawing for East River deer these tags are highly sought after and very difficult to get non-residents should not be able to participate in East River deer hunting . I believe there has to be some restrictions put on archery hunting many people who were unable to get a firearms tag started applying for archery tags but still apply for firearms today's archery hunters are very successful archery hunters Are not limited to one hunting unit how many tags does one Hunter need it won't be long and they will not be enough trees for all the tree stands

Steve Eide
Mount Vernon SD
steve.eide@chsinc.com

Comment:

This is completely unnecessary. Our systems works great the way it is. It gives the residents of this state multiple chances at drawing a big game license. We may not get exactly what we wanted each year, but we usually get something. Let's not screw up a good thing.Thank you

Dana Rogers

Hill City SD

dana.rogers.1@hotmail.com

Comment:

Having been involved with the Deer Stakeholders Group, the Phillip Focus group and attending several commission meetings, I think I have a pretty good handle on the issue. The GFP Commission tasked the department with coming up with a proposal that will provide more hunters a better chance at a preferred license. Hunter survey's from 2010 and 2014 show the majority of hunters surveyed were in favor of this. (Though the HOW it would happen wasn't yet proposed). The statistics also clearly show that the vast majority of hunters ONLY apply for a single firearms season. While a sizeable number of hunters do apply for 2 or more, the numbers drop precipitously as the number of licenses increase. I am one of the few hundred that applies for all 6 seasons and buy points. I am willing to support the draw change to combined all seasons and force all of us to make a #1 and #2 choice for firearms license allocation, provided the following amendments are made to assuage concerns that MANY SD firearms hunters have. Under this proposal, a LOT more permits will fall to the 3rd, 4th, 5th and leftover drawing. Under our current system, there is an 8% cap on NR permits for WR, BH and RFD. NRs can't pick up other permits until the 3rd draw. With a combined system, the distinct possibility of many more "resident" licenses becoming available to "NRs" before all the resident hunters have a chance to purchase the tags they want is a very real fear and possibility. If the commission were to amend the current proposal to push down that opportunity for NRs to purchase resident licenses from the 4th draw to the 5th draw AND amend the rules to cap NRs at only being able to obtain ONE tag per year, I think you would find much broader support. The fear of losing opportunities to NRs and further providing commercialization of wildlife opportunities while locking out residents is a REAL threat and fear. I am whole heartedly in support of allowing more resident hunters the opportunity at a preferred license, even if it means limiting my draw opportunities slightly. There will still be plenty of tags left to purchase/draw more than one. BUT doing that at the expense of enabling more commercialization of our wildlife resources is not something I support. I don't envy your tough decision but you have all been appointed to a leadership position. I pray that you will make the best decision for the wildlife #1, then the citizen sportsmen of SD #2. At no time should any monetary gain through NR dollars be elevated over our resident opportunities. Thank You for your time and efforts!

Daniel J. Amen

Rapid City SD

dan.amen@teamridco.com

Comment:

I think it is a good idea. I would also like to see a slight increase in a license, to help offset the possible loss of revenue due to less preference point purchases and to help the SDGFP manage the Game & Fish we have in South Dakota!

Douglas Traub
Rapid City SD
traubdm@rcmed.net

Comment:

The plan , as proposed, is going to create a disaster for deer hunters much like the current disaster for elk hunters. This system , as proposed, will create even more unrest among hunters . Hunters may have a slight increase in chances for drawing a particular tag, but the cost is going to be just like the current ELK application process. Thousands of hunters that used to draw their favorite deer tag every 2-3 years will now accumulate dozens of preference points (at ten bucks a pop or more), and still not get that desired one tag every year. There a limited number of deer, and natural disasters affect these numbers. There are many deer hunters desiring to hunt the same pool of deer. YOU MAY NOT DRAW THE TAG YOU WANT EVERY YEAR. (you won't in Montana, Wyoming or other states , either). changing to this system does not prevent even more hunters applying for your favorite coveted tag, leaving you with only a preference tag. This proposed system is flawed, will create huge pools of preference point holders and the possibility of drawing a desired deer tag is still NOT 100%.The reason you boast that over 40% of hunters desire this new system, is you have not pointed out the drawbacks clearly. The hunters have heard "oh, boy , this means I will draw in xyz county every year" which is not true. It means more preference points, which even if cubed, will not guarantee a deer tag for the desired county every year. No one in any of the "explanations" of this proposed system, understands the ramification of the change , nor have they communicated this to the hunters. (pardon - "future preference point holders") The proposed system is a bait and switch to suck in uninformed hunters, to a system which is much worse, and supported with propaganda.

Domanic Heim
Rapid City SD

Comment:

oppose

Don Hantzsche
Summerset SD
Tlwdah@gmail.com

Comment:

After reviewing this proposal over and over the only outcome I see is the limiting. Of deer tags forcing diverse hunters to a single season. Which means a hunter will be lucky to get a tag every other year. Currently I draw a blackhills tag every other year. So I also apply for a west river tag so I can hunt every year. Then you want to put muzzleloader (primitive weapon) in with rifle. Myself I started huntin with a muzzleloader after due to injuries I could no longer use a bow. So your taking another season away from me. I feed my family from from the rifle and muzzleloader tags. So this proposal also takes food out of my families mouth and increases our cost of feeding our family. This proposal is very detrimental to all the true hunters of South Dakota. I hear people complain they don't get a tag every year. The reason why is The only apply for a single tag in a hard to get unit. Their behavior will not change and the chances of them getting a tag every year will have even lower odds of success with these changes. So your going to penalize me because I hunt multiple seasons. I also see no data that backs or makes sense of this proposal. All that will be accomplished is ruining deer season for the realm dedicated hunters of South Dakota.

Terry Schutz

Eureka SD

tschutz@valleytel.net

Comment:

The current system seems fair and I don't see this change as a positive for the majority to the sportsmen and women that hunt in this state. It only helps a few hunters that only apply for one season, one unit, and bother w/leftovers.

William Albers

Rapid City SD

wmalbers@checkerelectric.com

Comment:

This is a terrible idea. Leave everything the way it is. If some people can't seem to draw a license without preference points maybe they should apply for a different unit.

Buddy Shearer

Sioux Falls SD

Comment:

Very poor IDEA.

Matt Ashbaugh

Brandt SD

Mattlashbaugh@gmail.com

Comment:

support

Spencer Vaa

Brookings SD

vaasl@brookings.net

Comment:

I do not support the draw structure where an applicant can select from only one of the 6 options (ER deer, WR deer, BH deer, Refuge deer, muzzleloader deer, CSP). I'd prefer to leave the current deer draw structure as it is. I could live with choosing from one of three options (ER deer, WR deer, BH deer).

Mike Rasmussen
Rapid City SD

Comment:

I prefer the best chance at my first choice I can get, higher success rates for first draw is better! This will give everyone a better chance at their preferred tag, and leave more tags available for second chance, making it much easier for everyone to get 1 tag.

Phillip Caster
Box Elder SD
pcast243@hotmail.com

Comment:

I support the idea of the proposed changes. I have one major problem with the concept. My preferred 1st choice would be the muzzleloader season. . . Unfortunately this season starts last, after every one else has had first crack at the trophy bucks. This is a somewhat primitive hunt that currently takes place in the harshest time of the season. If you are going to implement the proposed changes, you need to give us muzzleloader hunters an early East and West River opportunity. I suggest two weeks in late October/early November. Otherwise I will never apply for a 1st choice muzzleloader draw. I believe we are long overdue this early season muzzleloader hunt for those that draw an any deer tag. The doe tag muzzleloader season can remain a December hunt. This is not the first time I have suggested this, and I'm sure there is gonna be near 100% support of this change among Muzzleloader hunters.

Torrey Wahl
Selby SD
twahl@webwater.org

Comment:

Leave the deer lottery alone and the preference point system, it works just fine and it works like it should. If it's not broke don't fix it.

Bryan Schnell
Rapid City SD
PIR@RAP.MIDCO.NET

Comment:

I'm unclear on all of the changes and not sure I understand it clearly. I do understand the stated reason for the change is to give more applicants a better first draw chance. Yes, a majority said yes in your survey, but I think the questions was a bit loaded. If you asked if we wanted free steaks and beer also, you likely would have received a similar response. My biggest concern is what happens to preference points already accumulated. I have 3 active duty military sons and they have been accumulating points for the "some day" when they will be here and we can all hunt together. I'm extremely concerned this will affect that possibility. Please forward this to Commissioner Gary Jensen of RC. Thank you.

Terry Halvorson
Yankton SD
ttlhh4@gmail.com

Comment:

So if I'm reading correctly if I get my first choice draw out of my normally 6 chances, I have to wait till 3rd draw to try again I am strongly against this I would rather have more choices or chances on my first draw odds are better for me as I am one that has gotten 2 tags on first draw, all the units I apply for do not ever have a second draw so if it changes it will eliminate me for more than one tag, hunting in another state will probably be my best option if it passes, also the other 3 hunters I hunt with and my other friends

Jordin Stricherz
Reville SD

Comment:

I feel this is not the proper change to be done. As many people I know get 2 tags per year, a West and east river. I feel you should be able to get a east river and west river tag and then have to decide weather to rifle, bp, muzzleloader, etc. Changing this will only open the door to a whole lot more poaching issues.

Matthew Anderson
Hartford SD

Comment:

Dear South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commissioners. Please reject the proposal to require deer hunters to choose among deer hunting seasons in the first draw period. I support no change at this time, because none of the proposals are a benefit or needed. Also, I do not support the change made in January to the way preference points effects limited draw seasons. With the previous way of drawing deer tags, a person with the most preference points getting the tag, a hunter would have a good idea of when he or she would draw a tag. You would be able to plan and plot when you would draw. Now, you don't know when you will draw a firearm deer tag, it is all by chance, and with limiting to only one first draw selection, chances would be greater of not even drawing the preferred tags even with preference points. I feel the proposal is a roundabout way of limiting hunters to one firearm buck deer tag and have less hunters have multiple tags. Also, the proposal will limit opportunity for those who hunt with their family. Family hunts will be divided because each individual will have to choose only one first choice instead of applying for a tag for a family hunt and another preferred tag. A group of friends may also be divided because of only being able to choose one first draw choice. I have been asking other hunters their opinions about the new proposal. Most of them said they don't really understand it. Once explained to them, they have said they do not like it. The people who do understand the proposal have also been opposed to the idea. They want to keep the draw for tags the way it was and be able to apply for all firearm deer seasons. Everyone I have talked to also did not know of the change made in January to the draw and preference point system, most people do not like these changes and don't think it is fair. I have chosen another state to apply for tags and based my choice of states on how they do the tag draw system. I chose to only apply in another state with a true "top down" preference point system. I and others like to save up preference points and then "cash" them in for a tag when I want to draw the tag. Not save them up to only have a good chance at a tag or having to choose which bundle of preference points to use. The proposal would not benefit hunters so please reject the new proposal and consider to remove the changes the way preference points affect the limited draw seasons made in January.

Chris Kessler
Brandon SD
Chrisjkessler@gmail.com

Comment:

Nothing is wrong with the current system we have. I hunt deer every year with a buck tag. I'm not sure what other hunters are doing with their applications but, I have not had much trouble planning ahead and hunting many counties from east to west and as far north to south that one can go in our state. I've hunted deer in SD for more than 25 years and do not want any changes brought about. The system is not broken. The only two issues that need correcting are the season dates for muzzle loader, that season should take place before rifle. I would like to see the landowners removed from the general draw. If they want to purchase landowner tags fine but, why privilege them anymore than anyone else. Last I checked we all were SD residents. The wild game belongs to us all. So in counties with BLM, School land, National Forest lands do the other hunters receive privilege over the few landowners? It's a general draw keep it that way.

Steve Beardsley
Rapid City SD

Comment:

Dear Commissioner: Please adopt the first proposal suggested by the commission regarding deer hunting applications. It only makes sense - so that a person does not get multiple licenses while others get none. I do not understand the concept of giving extra to a few and none to others. Why on earth should a hunter from west river get a license in east river and west river. ... while another hunter that lives in their part of the state gets no license. This should have been changed many years ago but better now than never. This year my son and I both applied for west river deer and were rejected. I assume that hunters who play the game of applying did get their tags. If you do not pass the new option then I suppose people like my son and I will have to begin to play that game as well. That makes no sense at all.

Dale Weber
Salem SD

Comment:

Dear GFP Commissioners, Speaking for me and my Weber family we would greatly appreciate that you leave the deer application process as is. There are 13 of us that love to hunt and we think the current system is the best for most deer hunters in South Dakota including us. Thanks for all you do from all of us.

Efic Mergen
Mobridge SD
ericmergen45@gmail.com

Comment:

This new way absolutely limits the amount of tags one person can obtain, hence the whole reason for doing it.

Blake Geary

Aberdeen SD

blakeg88@hotmail.com

Comment:

Deer Draw Structure - No Change is needed. Me and my family enjoy hunting East River Deer season and also West River Deer season. Its been a family tradition for several years now. It's a totally different hunting experience between the two seasons. Don't try and fix something that isn't broke!

Dayne Weelborg

Bryant SD

Comment:

Respectfully I would like to concur with Wayne Lloyd, and Kurt Rahlf. I personally hunt all across the United States ???? and Canada ?????. There are many different systems across the states and provinces. I truly feel that the state of South Dakota has 1 thing on everyone else, the application process for the resident hunter. I will humbly admit that there are times you can't draw your 1st choice in your home county. But this process will not change the outcome for a many and quite possibly will worsen several situations. This appears to be another situation where the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Well I for one would like to take this moment to squeal.... and LOUD!! It would be a travesty if you went ahead with this system for the avid hunter; like Wayne refers to in his letter. Anyone who wishes to hunt in South Dakota is offered plenty of opportunity whether its in Brookings County or Ziebach County. There are opportunities for those that don't draw 1st choices. Many could get a great hunt on the 2nd choice and don't even put one down. I feel like as is also mentioned in the letter, that numbers can be skewed to show almost anything someone wants them to show. The fact is you will be alienating far more great South Dakotans if you follow through with this plan. I appreciate your consideration with all the true sportsman who want a voice in matters near and dear to our traditions and family heritage. I have four kids that I want to pass down our traditions to. West River deer hunts should be for everyone willing to put in the time and build the relationships. I feel strongly that Special Buck has no place in this matter considering who is sending in for the tags and the criteria necessary for getting the tag. And you also forfeit the regular county tags if drawn.
Thank You

Brent Reilly

Hartford SD

Comment:

Dear Commissioners, I am a life-long SD resident and I wanted to take the time to address the proposed changes to the various deer season draws in the state. I attempted to attend the local focus group discussion but I was not selected to participate. I have concerns about the proposed change to the deer draw process. On the surface, it makes sense and it is an easy story to tell. In reality, I believe it will do little to address what is a supply and demand imbalance in select units. The fact is, there are some units/seasons that have more demand than tags and this proposal is unlikely to meaningfully change it. The yet to be determined improvement in draw odds of these units will come at the expense of many SD hunters that hunt multiple deer seasons. This proposal specifically targets non-landowner hunters that hunt multiple deer seasons. Many of these cherished hunts have been going on for decades with family and friends. If adopted, many hunters are forced to determine which hunt they prefer. For hunters that have been attending these for years it seems a bit like having to pick your favorite child. One thing that SD is great about is the opportunity to go hunting. A hunter can hunt the prairie, the river systems or the Black Hills with excellent access to public hunting across the state. A hunter that can't draw a firearms buck tag annually is not working very hard to figure out a solution. This is no different than a WY elk hunter being upset that they can't draw

"their" elk unit every year even though they could hunt elk every year if they hunted a different WY unit. As a hunter you need to adapt, look at the publically available information about draw statistics and land access to figure out some options. Or conversely, if you're inflexible or focused on only one unit and/or tag type, to accept the fact that you can't draw a high demand unit every year. I disagree with the methodology of the data that was presented both in the video and in the proposal document. It appears to be a highly selected data set versus a true random sample, a terrible tactic for policy decisions. I'm sure folks were doing the best they could but one couldn't view the data as objective or statistically meaningful. For one, the two groups referenced were not randomly selected among the 57,689 deer hunters but rather were very likely to be hunters invested on one side of the issue or the other. The Focus Group consisted of 225 hunters which was 0.39% of all deer hunters. The Online Group was 613 or 1.06% if they were all unique users as one can take the survey multiple times. Even with those flaws in the data referenced, the results were basically split 50/50 yet the folks making the recommendations push for a change to a structure that's been in place for decades. I recall another survey being taken a couple of years back about satisfaction that was sent to all deer hunters, why are those results not referenced or included? What is the plan to address the changes to the GF&P's total revenue stream from deer tags? This is not mentioned once but it will be a material unintended consequence of this proposal. Once hunters figure out the new system there will have to be a major drop off in deer preference points (PP's) purchased if the proposal is adopted. Today, some hunters

either apply for multiple seasons and/or the PP's of the seasons looking to be combined into one draw. In the future it would be illogical to buy PP's for ones' lower preferred seasons as you will never draw them. The sell job is that nothing is changing with your PP's, the truth is they are now worthless outside of your top season or two even if you have been applying for some of the hard to draw seasons for years. Further, is there a plan to refund PP fees that hunters have paid and accumulated in past years? If the proposal goes through, it radically changes the basis for buying them in the first place. I recognize the easy thing in life is to disagree on something thing in the public domain but refuse to put any alternatives forward. Toward that end, here are some options that would also allow more folks to draw their first choice buck tag. To be clear, I'm not advocating for all of them but found it interesting they weren't brought forward as viable options. Alternatives to Consider

- Landowners are currently given preferential treatment in how the draws are conducted with a special allocation of 50% of the tags. If the GF&P would remove the landowner preference subsidy aspect of the draw, the problem would likely be solved. Landowners still have the ability to apply like all other hunters in the regular draw or if unsuccessful they have the unique ability to get a tag to hunt their own ground, just as they do with the current system. If we are redoing the whole draw system in the name of perceived fairness, the GF&P should stop allocating 50% of the tags to one specific interest group right out of the gate.
- Open BH, ER and WR rifle seasons on the same date annually. This would discourage hunters from hunting multiple seasons as a portion of hunters only go on opening weekend.

- Issue more tags. This is probably the only thing that will fix the supply/demand imbalance in many units/seasons if the only acceptable outcome is to draw a firearm buck tag every year. The flip side of course is lower quality sustainable hunting.
- Remove all Non-Resident license allocation as it opens more tags up for SD hunters to get their first choice.
- Increase the cost of the tags as some folks would think twice about applying for that 2nd rifle season if the cost were higher.
- More an elk alternative but if this is adopted, the GF&P should do the same thing with elk tags for the same reasons. It's not "fair" if Hunter A draws two elk tags before Hunter B draws one over the course of a few years. Combine all the elk seasons into one draw and if a hunter draws a tag for any season they need to wait 9 years to apply again, more unique hunters get to elk hunt. Same logic and same impact on PP fees going down. I think the proposed change is pushing something through that I'm not sure the vast majority of hunters think is a problem. This change would get rid of the special seasons like CSP, Refuge and Muzzleloader for many hunters. I'm sure

there are a few folks that would make that their preferred season but the people typically hunting those seasons hunt the ER, WR or BH seasons. It's personally disappointing to know that I won't be able to hunt a treasure like Custer State Park or LaCreek Refuge unless I'm willing to give up going on a family hunt that has been going on for decades. I've tried to draw those tags for years, really looked forward to the day it happens and faithfully paid my PP fees. With the proposed changes those are things that structurally won't happen. These decisions won't be unique to me, the proposed changes will impact a lot of SD deer hunters, and hopefully they too speak their minds on the issue. I also think a bit of the supply/demand imbalance in certain unit/seasons is the result of the perfect storm of factors that have come together. Certain pockets of the state have been hit hard with EHD, which rightly resulted in tag reductions to rebuild the population. If you also layer in lower gas prices and an improved economy more folks are out hunting and are willing to travel to hunt which overall is a good thing for hunting and the local economies. Is this a long-term trend or more of a point in time issue? I'm going to guess it's more the latter than the former based on national hunting trends but only time will tell.

I appreciate the Commission and GF&P's work on a tough issue. In life, I believe in change for the better, I just think these sweeping changes to a framework successfully in place for decades doesn't add up. How many of the 57,000+ deer hunters in SD think there is a problem or even know about the proposed changes? What will the GF&P's response be to hunters who think this is a silver bullet only to find out once implemented that it still

takes 2-3 years to draw their preferred buck tag?

Rob Neuenfeldt

Flandreau SD

robneuenfeldt@gmail.com

Comment:

There is a wise saying. DONT FIX WHAT ISN'T BROKEN!! The new draw proposal has so many bad components you can't list them all. The current system is not broken, leave it alone!

Dean Hass

Rapid City SD

deanhass79@hotmail.com

Comment:

For the record I am opposed to changing the drawing structure from the current system to only being able to apply for a first choice and second choice in one of the six deer seasons. From what I have been hearing from other avid hunters in the area is that the change is being pushed through because people with are complaining that they aren't drawing enough of the licenses that they are applying for. I think the current system seems as fair as you can get.

Lonnie Braun

Rapid City SD

Comment:

Thanks for all your hard work on behalf of sportsmen. Four of us discussed the three proposals for deer applications. While number 1 is basically what I advocated some time ago, we all agreed number 2 would further the goal of people more likely getting their preferred tag. I would prefer number 2. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

John Sayles

Rapid City SD

jsayles@rushmore.com

Comment:

just leave things alone, why do you feel you have to re-invent the wheel. It is tough enough to draw a hills tag as it is, stop with the new rules, when you think about it logically, you don't manage a thing, how did all the game come to be. before your department came into existence?

Robert Kallemeyn

Pierre SD

R.kallemeyn@yahoo.com

Comment:

I would put all west river and hills and muzzle for west under one draw. Then all east river and refuge plus muzzle for east under one draw. Then allow to apply for east and west and only one tag for each limit of two first draw.

Joshua Hagemann

Mission Hill SD

Comment:

Dear Members of the Commission, I can't believe it has even come to this. By that, I mean the fact that I have to write you concerning the possible change of the deer licensing allocation system. There are so many problems with how this process has proceeded that I barely know where to begin. I will do my best to break it down into categories and cover as many points as I can.

Deer Management Plan Survey

To start with, GF&P states that, in the original hunter opinion surveys out during the deer management plan process in 2014, roughly 71% of the respondents said that they would like a better chance to draw at least one buck deer license. Who wouldn't want a better chance to get their preferred license? I'm sure I would have chosen the same response. My problem with this is how the question was presented to the survey recipients. I think the results may have been quite different if the participants filling out the survey had known that the GFP planned to take away their ability to apply for multiple seasons. GFP asked a question and the respondents didn't have all the pieces to make an informed decision. It would be akin to an employer surveying their employees on whether they would like to receive an increase in pay. I'm sure most employees would respond to the survey in favor of a pay increase. Then in turn, the employer coming back with a plan to increase pay but take away paid time off. The employees may not want to give up paid time off in order to receive a pay raise. The employer could just say the majority of employees obviously wanted this. That is what Game Fish and Parks is doing now. The department is claiming that 71% of people want a change. However, they may not want the change if it means losing their chance at multiple seasons.

Deer License Allocation Focus Groups

After GFP decided that the licensing process needed to be changed, they had work groups that settled on bringing 3 alternatives to focus groups. All of the deer license holders with an email on file were purportedly contacted regarding education on the alternatives and the opportunity to sign up for a chance to be included in the focus groups. There are a few problems I have with how this was process was carried out. First off, I never received the email. I thought maybe I had missed it and it went to my junk email folder, but it wasn't in there either. I don't know how it happened, considering that I receive all of the other email correspondence when I apply for a license online. I only found out about the focus groups because it had been posted on the East River South Dakota Hunting and Fishing group on Facebook.

When I started discussing the allocation alternatives and focus groups with others, I found out there were more people that hadn't received the email. I personally knew of five people that had an email address on file and did not receive the email. I contacted Game, Fish and Parks via the website email address regarding my concerns and Tom Kirschenmann responded. I informed him that some individuals had not received notification of the allocation alternatives and the focus group meetings. He said he would take the names I gave him and "check with the licensing and IT folks." I never received any further correspondence from Mr. Kirschenmann. If I personally know five people that didn't receive notification, I can only imagine how many other had no idea what was happening. It seems that a mix-up as large as that would deserve some type of explanation. I finally receive some explanation when I spoke with Kevin Robling. He stated that the group emailing system would not send out batch emails to Hotmail email addresses. He said that the number missed added up to around 3000 individuals. GF&P knew this and still didn't use any other means to contact those individuals. Second, what happens to the people that don't have email addresses or apply online? My dad doesn't have internet period. I send in the applications for him if he doesn't have the paper application. My Grandpa doesn't have an

email address either, along with many other people. There weren't any press releases. An entire section of the population was disregarded in this process. Very little was done to share information with the public. There weren't any news releases. Nothing was listed on GF&P's website in the "News" area. There wasn't even a single note regarding it on the GF&P Facebook page. How is the public supposed to be involved without GF&P using any of the universally accepted forms of information dissemination? I was finally able to sign up for the focus groups and was selected to attend. I listened to the presentation, but was not convinced that alternatives 1 or 2 were better options than what is currently in place. When it came to the survey I had another issue. We were asked how many licenses we typically applied for. I selected all of the licenses that I buy preference for since I will eventually apply for them. I also selected seasons I have typically applied for in previous year, even though I don't apply for them every year. The only problem is, when everything was tabulated, it was compared to only 2017 licensing data for the first choice in the first draw. In 2017, however, I had only applied for one license. I was misrepresented in the data as a multiple license applicant, as I'm sure many others were. Also there wasn't anything stating that people shouldn't count any licenses received after the first draw or first choice. It should have stated: How many licenses did you apply for in 2017, not including purchased preference points, second choice tags or any licenses purchased after the first draw? How many people replied incorrectly to the number of licenses they applied for, because they weren't fully informed?

Online Video and Survey

We were informed at the focus group meeting, that when the information was tabulated it would be released for the public to see. That, however, was not the case. The next correspondence any of us received was stating that they did not get enough input from the public at the focus group meetings. Again, I didn't receive an email about this and had to find out on Facebook. This need for more input came as a surprise to me. This is after we questioned Kevin Robling, in our focus group meeting, whether enough people were being included in this process. Kevin Robling stated, "The number of focus group participants is statistically significant." How did the number of focus group participants go from being "statistically significant" to the project needing more input? It makes me feel like the results were different from what GF&P had wanted. The online survey was a last ditch effort to get the results they wanted. As in the focus group survey, I feel like participants in this survey may have been confused at how to correctly respond when asked which licenses they applied for. It asked which licenses participants applied for typically and allowed you to place a mark by each license. Again, it seems irresponsible to compare the number of licenses a participant typically applies for against a single year (2017) of data. The participants needed to know that their responses were only being compared to 2017 in order to answer appropriately. For example if I were answering the survey questions:

1. How many first-draw licenses did I apply for in 2017? In 2017 I applied for one first draw license.
2. How many licenses do I typically apply for? Anywhere from 1-3.

The wording of a question affects the results in a survey.

Presentation of Data

There are a few problems with how the data sets were presented to the public at the July 11th 2018 commission meeting. I will try to address them in the order in which they were presented.

Declining Applicant Numbers

First is the presentation of firearm deer applicant numbers from 2009 to 2017. I have included the graph from the presentation. I completely agree that there is a downward trend in applicant numbers. From what I understand this trend is common throughout the nation. When I spoke with Kevin Robling over the phone, I asked him if South Dakota was doing worse than other states. I also asked if any other states were trending upward or at least remaining stable. I wanted to know if we were changing the system to something that was working in another location. Kevin told me that South Dakota was doing better than many other states. He also did not know of any other state where applicant numbers were trending upward or remaining stable. When most, if not all, of the other states are witnessing the same decline in applicant numbers as we are and our state is doing better than many other states, why are we changing our licensing system? It seems that there may be another issue causing the decline. I understand that a decline applicant numbers is not a good thing. My problem with the presentation is that it tries to draw a direct correlation to applicant success rates. Any number of variables could have an effect on downward trend of applicant numbers. One possible reason for declining applicant numbers is the declining access to hunting land. How many small farmers are there now, compared to what there used to be? My family has lost over 1000 acres of hunting land since I started hunting. A lot of this property is now consolidated into larger farming operations. Fewer separate landowners can lead to fewer options for hunters to gain permission. It is frustrating that even when you can draw a tag, you may not have a place to hunt. East River farms have gotten larger and it has gone towards pay-to-hunt operations in West River areas. When we hunted in Perkins County South Unit (53C) in 2016, we inquired about hunting on a couple different ranches. One ranch that we had hunted for years previously had paying hunters that year and we were

no longer welcome. Another ranch, where we inquired about hunting, asked us for \$800 a gun. If it weren't for public land we would not have had anywhere to hunt that year. A good example of just how much hunting access can change applicant numbers is the difference between the Perkins County North (53A) and South (53C) units. The North unit (53A) has a lot more public ground than the South unit (53C). It is also much harder to draw a tag in the North unit (53A). Even though there were only 300 anydeer tags available for the North unit (53A) this year, 1018 hunters applied for those tags. In contrast, 500 anydeer tags were available in the South unit (53C), and only 693 hunters applied for those tags. It is the same county but there is a drastic difference. I think the most likely cause of the decrease in applicants is the decrease in tag numbers. The only data presented to the public shows a decline in applicants from 2009 to 2017. The number of applicants dropped over time from 58,583 in 2009 to 52,633. I asked Game, Fish and Parks for tag numbers for those years to compare. Over time from 2009 to 2017 tags that allowed hunters to harvest a buck fluctuated slightly, but had an overall drop from 53,194 to 40,889. As available tags dropped, applicants dropped as well. When you consider that preferred tags dropped by 12,305, it doesn't seem terribly bad that applicants numbers only dropped by 5,950. The most glaring correlation from this data is 2014. If you examine the trend from 2013 to 2014, applicant numbers dropped by 5,281. Why was there such a drop in one year? The other thing that occurred from 2013 to 2014 is that preferred tag numbers dropped by 3,216. This was in correlation with the EHD outbreak in 2013. Applicant numbers would not have dropped that abruptly based off the previous year's draw success rate. There is no other reason for applicants to decrease by such an extreme amount, unless they were responding to the drop in tag numbers.

Age structure of applicants

Next in the presentation, there is a slide with graphs covering age distribution of applicants within the 2017 draw and age distribution of one season applicants within the 2017 draw. I have included the graphs from the presentation for reference. The graph of Average Number of Applicants per Individual Age within Age Interval seems to show that young hunter recruitment is lacking. I understand there is some worry that, if we don't recruit the younger hunters, our hunter interest for the future could suffer. However, I believe that this graph is misleading. If you believe that this graph depicts the 12-17 age range as independent individuals making their own decisions on which seasons, and how many licenses they will apply for, then this graph could spell doom and gloom. I don't believe this is the case though. Think about where you were during the ages of 12-17. Think about who made your decision during the ages of 12-17. If you were like me, you lived with your parents and your parents governed your choices in general. When I went hunting, it was because my parents bought the licenses for me. My parents also paid for all of the expenses on every hunting trip. I was not the one in control. If my parents didn't want me to hunt a given season, I didn't hunt that season. Another factor that is not touched upon is Youth Deer. It doesn't seem that youth deer tags were figured into this. I may be incorrect, but I can't know that from the information shown here. How many parents purchase a youth tag for their child and then don't send in an application for the other seasons. If their child already has a guaranteed tag, they may not feel the need to purchase another license for their child. If you include Youth Deer applicants, do the total applicants within that age range increase? Are many of these children getting multiple tags if Youth Deer is considered? This also coincides with the second graph in this series, which covers one season applicants by age range. I know, as a parent of 2 children, I would not send in for multiple seasons for my children. My wife and I both hunt. We both spend money on tags, we both spend money on trips, and we both bring venison home to put in our freezer. I would definitely buy a youth tag for my children and I may even send in applications for our East River Deer season for them. However, it just wouldn't be possible to buy multiple tags and pay for multiple trip expenses for our children. We would also be shooting more deer than we would need to feed our family. For this age range, the time of year has to be considered. All of the deer seasons take place during the school year. How many days can a child miss for hunting seasons? A child may be able to hunt a local season over a weekend, but often times a season that takes place on the other side of the state may require a few days in a row to make it worth the effort. As a child, I would have loved to hunt every deer season, but I was not making the decisions. These graphs also show a trend that the 31-40 age range has the highest average number of applicants per individual age. It also shows that they have the lowest representation among one season applicants. Kevin Robling voiced some concern at this when we spoke. He was wondering why the 31-40 age range is where most of our total applicants and multi-season applicants reside. He also questioned why there was such a difference from the 18-30 age range. It seems simple enough to me when I look at my journey through the 18-30 range to the 31-40 range. In the 18-30 range, I was in college. I had school to attend, and I didn't have money to pay for more tags and trips, nor did I have the time. After college, my wife and I got married and had children. We weren't well established in our careers and we weren't making enough money to take hunting trips. We also had small children. It isn't easy to take an infant or a toddler on a hunting trip that is farther away. It is also harder to find someone willing to watch small children for more than a couple days. Now, I am in the 31-40 range. Both my wife and I are further in our careers. We make more money, we have more flexibility with our time, and our children are old enough that we can take them with or have someone watch them while we are gone. A person's life situation can dictate which seasons and how many seasons they

can apply for. I see the peak in the 31-40 range as a good thing. The 31-40 range is when most people are raising children. Those are the people introducing their children to hunting. The fact that the 31-40 range is highest bodes well for future hunter numbers. Frankly, I would be much more concerned if that number were lower. My last observation for these graphs is the lack of comparable data. This is only one set of data from 2017. Without any comparison graphs from previous years, there is no way to decide, for certain, if these numbers are good or bad. Hypothetically, if you said that there were 50 traffic fatalities last year, it may sound bad. Then, if you looked at the previous 10 years and the average was 150 fatalities per year, it would seem like things were improving. You can't base everything off of one year.

Focus Group and Online Video Survey Data

I have a hard time even looking at the breakdown of the Focus Group and Online Survey data. It has been, in my opinion, grossly misrepresented and neglected throughout this entire process. Again, I have included the graphs from the presentation that I will be referencing. First up is the Most Preferred Alternative for both the Focus Groups and the Online Surveys. There is only one group from the graphs where a majority favors change. Only the one season applicants from the Focus Group data preferred a change (alternative 2) rather than no change. The one season applicants from the Focus Group represented 39 people out of a total of 838 participants of both surveys or 4.7%. They also only represent 17.2% of the Focus group total. I don't understand how this proposal has moved forward with only one group out of six in favor of change. I am especially confused when that group represents such a small percentage of respondents. The next graph is supposed to show Most Preferred Alternative across all Participants/Respondents. It does not show this however. It actually tries to compare the percentage of all Participants/Respondents that prefer change vs. no change. However, you can't add data groups this way. When you add Alternatives 1 and 2 you are not representing a total of individuals that want change. If you do this, you are assuming that because an individual prefers one change alternative they would also be in favor of the other change alternative. It does not work that way. They may like Alternative 1 but if they can't have it, they may prefer no change. Alternatives 1 and 2 are not interchangeable and therefore cannot be presented as one set of data. If you truly wanted to represent change vs. no change, you first have to narrow down which alternative is favored between 1 and 2. For example, if Alternative 1 were the most preferred change alternative you could then pit it against Alternative 3 (no change) and you would have an accurate result between change and no change. Regardless of the faults in the data, the graph still indicates that neither the Focus Group Participants nor the Online Respondents support change. The final graph of this set is supposed to show the Most Preferred Alternative of Participants/Respondents that Typically Apply for One Season. Again, this graph does not accomplish that. This graph has the same fault as the previous. Its purpose is to highlight one season applicants. By giving one season applicants their own graph, it gives the appearance that the responses of one season applicants are more important than responses from everyone else. I spoke with Kevin Robling regarding the way one season applicants were favored in this graph. His response was that one season applicants were "under-represented" in both the Focus Groups and the Online Surveys. His basis for this is that, in 2017, 67% of the applicants applied for only one season. Again basing everything off one year of data is irresponsible. I asked Kevin if the individual applicants had been evaluated over previous years to see if some of the one season applicants from 2017 had applied for multiple seasons in previous years. There are 8 years of data presented in the other graphs for this presentation yet only 2017 is used for this part. Kevin said that they had not evaluated any overlap. He stated, "the only thing that affects draw odds annually are the actual names in the draw buckets for that year." I understand that, in one given year, the number of seasons an individual is applying for and the number of individuals applying are the only things that affect the odds of drawing a tag. The problem with this logic is assuming that the 67% that applied for one season in 2017 are the same 67% percent every year. I know that this isn't the case. I am one of the individuals that applied for one season in 2017 and so are three of my hunting partners. We only applied for our East River Deer tags in 2017, but in 2016, we applied for both East River Deer and West River Deer. The reason it seems that one season applicants are being "under-represented" is because the original survey process and data tabulation defines them incorrectly. As I mentioned earlier in this paper, I should have been counted as a one season applicant when being compared to only 2017. If data from several years had been evaluated, the percentage of one season applicants would be lower and I would have been counted correctly. My three hunting partners and I are being counted as part of the 67% that are one season applicants. The GF&P is assuming that the majority of one season applicants are in favor of change. I know my hunting partners are not in favor of change, but GF&P is assuming that we are. Even if we disregard all the faults in the survey process, the data comparisons and the assumption that 67% of the applicants are "one season applicants", the graph presented still doesn't support changing the draw system. Only one of the two data sets of one season applicants (Focus Group) has a majority in favor of change. The presentation of data for this proposal has me very frustrated. I have a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from SDSU, so I know enough about these things for this process to irk me. I know Kevin Robling from my time there. I know he is a well-educated, intelligent person. I know there are many other intelligent people within the department as well. This is probably the most frustrating part about it. I feel like these intelligent people should

see the problems that I see. Frankly, I don't understand how they can't. I feel like they should know more about it than I do. There can only be a few explanations for this. One option is that I am more intelligent than everyone involved with this proposal. I hardly think that is the case. Another option is that they don't care that they are using garbage data to support the proposal, because they want it to pass. I'm not sure if this is the case or not. The last explanation is that they are being forced to back this proposal, even though they know the data does not support it. I don't normally get caught up in conspiracy theories, but having worked for government agencies in the past, I know it is plausible. I really don't know how we got to this point. How is this proposal even up for consideration, with little to no support at all? The evidence to support this proposal is based completely on assumption and inference. There is no credible data in favor of this proposal.

Lack of Involvement from Applicants

Another area of concern for me regards that lack of input from other applicants. Annually, there are 50,000-60,000 unique individual applicants in South Dakota, yet we only had a few hundred that were involved in the Focus Groups and Online Surveys. This could mean a few things. Maybe most of the applicants don't care what happens either way. Maybe a good share of applicants had no idea what was happening in the process. There are still people I talk to that have no idea that the proposal is up for finalization. In communicating with Kevin Robling, I asked why a survey on the deer licensing allocation alternatives wasn't mailed to every registered applicant. I expressed that GF&P always shows high survey return rate on end of the season surveys. It would also assure that everyone was directly informed of the process. Kevin stated the following: "With something this complex, social scientists strongly advise not to send folk a public opinion survey on topics/changes that are not easily comprehensible. Research data shows when folks don't fully understand something "no change is the default and this has a definite possibility to bias any dataset. Surveys are not meant to inform people, they are meant to gather opinion. The focus group and online survey format were selected to inform folks then receive feedback." I agree that applicants may have leaned toward no change if they were sent only a survey without education on the alternatives. I argue that it is the duty of the GF&P to inform the public on possible changes. It is especially true in something that could affect the entire future of deer hunting. Every year GF&P prints a hunting handbook. I looked at the 2016 handbook as an example and saw that it was printed at a cost of \$0.13 per copy. A 66 page book costs only \$0.13. For something this important GF&P could have printed out a 66 page educational booklet and survey covering the deer license allocation alternatives for less than the \$8,000 that GF&P is now paying for 5 months of fishing on Reetz Lake. Everyone could have been included. A one-time payment to educate the public on one of the most important parts of South Dakota's outdoors. I don't understand it. That being said, if the Focus Groups and Online survey were the preferred means to receive feedback, why are the results not being evaluated for what they are. Instead, the only responses that seem to carry any weight are from one season applicants. Kevin continued his previous explanation. "Any time you have a self-selected process we expect participation from both the left and right tails of the population distribution. That is why we can't consider the results from the focus group participants and online survey a vote or poll." Ok. If that is the reasoning behind it, I understand not using the lopsided responses from multiple season applicants as an indicator of what the public wants. In turn, you cannot use the responses from the one season applicants as an indicator of what the public wants either. You don't get to pick and choose which parts of the data to use, when presenting it to the public. If the results can't be used as a "vote or poll" then maybe a different process should have been selected. GF&P knew that it would be a self-selected process for the Focus Groups. If the results were biased towards multi-season applicants, they had the opportunity to select a different process as a follow-up. Instead, GF&P chose the same self-selected process for the Online Survey. You can't repeat the same process and expect different results. Lack of involvement could also stem from lack of interest in the licensing system. It is possible that a good share of applicants don't care what happens. If the feedback received through the Focus Groups, Online Surveys, and general comments on the matter are any indication, it definitely shows who the passionate applicants are. Why aren't GF&P listening to these people. The most passionate do tend to be the multi season applicants. These people will end up suffering the most from this proposal. If you start repressing your most passionate faction of applicants, it will only hurt the future of deer hunting. Who do you think is most likely to introduce their children to hunting? Is it the people that don't care what happens? Is it the fair-weather hunters? Or is it the applicants that apply for multiple licenses and are willing to drive across the state and walk several miles through public ground just for the chance to harvest a deer? I think it's easy to see.

The Proposal

I have many issues with this entire process. Even if this proposal was the holy grail of alternatives, the process was terrible. Aside from the process, this proposal has plenty of its own problems. My first issue is the timeline for the proposal. Why is GF&P rushing to have this proposal finalized? GF&P has had since the 2014 License Allocation Survey to work on this proposal, yet the public has only been included in the process since this spring. Why is GF&P not taking more time to get a representative set of survey information from the applicant pool before bringing this to the Commission? Why does this proposal have to be finalized right now? The world

will not end if you wait on finalization until there is actual proof of support from the public. I covered a few of the issues earlier, including increase in landowner buck tag purchases and stifling your most passionate hunters, in turn hurting hunter recruitment for the future. Another issue is pushing the passionate hunters to find other alternatives to hunt deer. It could also make some areas harder to draw a tag. There could be an economic impact on businesses. It will bring many more nonresident hunters into the state. It could cripple the hunting culture in South Dakota. These are all possibilities that I could see happening. If the most passionate group of hunters can only apply for one rifle tag, more of them will start searching for other ways to fulfill their deer hunting needs. They might start taking their money to other states. Another possibility is that more of them start buying archery tags. Archery tag numbers have already increased from 14,515 in 2005 to 29,312 in 2017. How long before the archery license numbers increase to the point where there is a draw for that as well. All you have accomplished is kicking the can down the road. You created another problem while trying to solve the first problem. The consensus of GF&P is that this proposal will increase success rate across the board. While it may increase draw success a great deal in some areas, other areas will only increase slightly. I could actually see a possibility of success rate decreasing. Most populated counties are still going to be very difficult to draw. Where I live, in Yankton County, we are close to the point where landowner preference may not guarantee you a tag in the first draw. It's even worse for the general public. That isn't going to magically change. Maybe a couple percent increase could happen, but it will be hardly noticeable to most of the applicants. I happen to apply for Lake County most often. In my case I apply for a Special Buck tag every other year. On the year I apply for the Special Buck tag I don't apply for Lake County. If this proposal passes and Special Buck is included as a choice within the East River season, I will probably stop applying for it. Lake County would become my preferred choice every year. My name would be another name in the hat making it harder to draw on a year when I would have originally applied for the Special Buck tag. This proposal could also have a negative economic impact for businesses across the state. I apply with friends and family every other year for a West River tag. We buy our preference point on the year in between and then we are all but guaranteed an anydeer tag for our unit. Lodging is hard to find where we hunt. Since we are fairly certain we will draw, it allows us to make reservations for a place to stay almost a year in advance. Also, if we know we are going, we can schedule our vacation days so that we can hunt 4-5 days. We spend a lot of money on lodging, fuel, and food on these trips. If it changes, there is a good chance it would stop many people like us from planning trips and spreading money around the state as we go. Again, my preference would be Lake County in East River deer. I don't know that I could choose differently, when I place so much value on the time I spend hunting with my dad. There would definitely be tags left in the second or third draws, but it would be nearly impossible to get the time off work and schedule everything by that time. Many of the complaints I hear from West River hunters and landowners are regarding East River hunters like me. It's unfortunate that some East River hunters have put a bad taste in the mouths of West River Folks. I always try to conduct myself, as I would want people to act around me. Our group generally only hunts public ground, but we do ask for permission on private sometimes. Most often we are denied, but that is the landowner's right. We try to respect the people in the area we are visiting. If this proposal passes, the floodgates of nonresidents will open. Yes, they will bring money into the state, but a share of them will also bring trouble. If West River landowners have trouble with trespassers now, just wait until nonresident hunters in some of these counties outnumber the resident hunters. Finally, I see the hunting culture of South Dakota in jeopardy. Being with friends and family was rated important to very important by 82% of respondents listed in the table of Deer hunters' reasons for why they deer hunt in the South Dakota White-tailed Deer and Mule Deer management Plan, 2017-2023. If this proposal passes, it will effectively kill the group application. My dad has hunted with a variation of the same hunting group in the Black Hills since he was 18. The only years they don't go is when they don't draw. My father will be 62 this year. This is set up to end 44 years of a hunting tradition. Everyone in the group would have to agree that one season is there preferred choice. They would be putting their eggs in one basket. Either everyone would get the tag or no one would. It's going to be nearly impossible to get everyone to agree on what their preferred choice should be. It doesn't seem to matter what percentage of South Dakota hunters value hunting with family and friends. This is going to tear apart several family and friend hunting groups. That, to me, is the saddest part of all.

Re-evaluation if passed

The reason I have put so much effort towards fighting this proposal is the difficulty I know we will all face in changing it back if it does pass. When I spoke with Kevin, he tried to assure me that GF&P would continue to evaluate everything if this proposal passed. He said that it would always be possible to change the draw process if it didn't seem to be working. However, Kevin was unable to give me any parameters that would be used to evaluate success or failure of the proposal. Kevin said in the presentation that he would like 2-3 years of data to evaluate the new structure, yet when evaluating the current structure only one year (2017) was used as reference. I'm not sure what to expect for an evaluation process. If applicant success rate goes up slightly, would it be considered a success? If applicant numbers increase would it be considered a success? Would it be a failure if either data set declines? The public has no hard answers to give us any confidence. What can we really expect? Once it is changed, there is very little the public can do to change it back unless we have the

support of the Commission.

Closing

As I previously stated, the public can do very little to change anything without the support of the Commission. I am looking now to the Commission. I am asking you to listen to your public. We are speaking. The people you are hearing from are the people that care. I'm not referring to only those that agree with me. If by the time all the public comments are in, there is a majority in favor of the proposal I would understand passing it. You are in your position to do the right thing for the public. I plead to you: Please don't ignore us.

Eric Nesheim

Baltic SD

eric_nesheim@yahoo.com

Comment:

As an avid hunter who applies for more than one license I strongly oppose change to current system.

Tyler Tarbox

Watertown SD

Comment:

It frustrating that our state thinks they need to change something that has been working great for many years. It's obvious that majority of SD sportsman oppose this proposal and yet the state pushes it. Another example of not fully supporting the resident sportsman of SD.

Jason Mathiesen

Canton SD

jason.mathiesen@gmail.com

Comment:

I think people supported having to choose between a couple tags. Not ER,WR, BH MZ, Refuge and CP deer. That is lunacy. I would strongly support choosing between ER and WR but not all of them combined. I hunt and draw a WR deer tag everyyear and now you are limiting that. I do not draw a BH deer tag every year and that isnt ideal but I wouldnt want the ability to draw that tag keep me from doing all of my other hunting. Why not make people have a choice between ER or WR and then Refuge or CP Deer?

Tim Leer

Rapid City SD

Comment:

GFP just made a change to cubing preference points, now they want to screw this up with this ridiculous idea. Let the cubing change work as it is going to help in many units. Do not make any changes to the current system, we like it the way it is!

Cody Imberi
Mobridge SD
Crimberi@gmail.com

Comment:

Leave things the way they are don't change it.

Justin Murphy
Baltic SD
justintmurphy@outlook.com

Comment:

Commissioners, A petition was started in opposition of the deer tag allocation proposal on August 27, 2018. After just three days of circulation the petition has received more than 6,000 signatures. That is over 6,000 sportsmen who you represent. This proposal is not what the majority of South Dakota sportsmen want. Please reconsider your stance and listen to the people you are appointed to represent. Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,Justin Murphy