



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senate Passes Deer Control Legislation

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) June 6, 2005

The New York State Senate today passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) to better control the state's deer populations, to lessen the damage to crops, cut down on car-deer accidents and reduce the extended costs to the insurance industry and ratepayers caused by the rapidly growing deer population.

"In New York State, we lose approximately \$59 million dollars in agricultural production and income each year because of the destruction done by deer," said Senator Larkin. "We are also seeing increases in the number of serious motor vehicle accidents with deer and increased loss of life as a result; and we continue to be extremely concerned about the increased spread of diseases such as lyme disease that are carried by deer."

"The increasing deer herd in New York is resulting in greater losses to crops and property, as well as more injuries and even death to innocent drivers," Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno said. "These bills attempt to control the deer population in New York in the safest and most beneficial way possible."

The Senate gave final legislative passage to legislation (S.1964), sponsored by Senator Larkin that would establish an interagency task force to study the causes and severe damage to agricultural crops and horticultural plantings, as well as the increasing number of motor vehicle accidents directly caused by deer. This bill will be sent to the Governor for his

consideration.

Further, the Senate passed legislation (S.443) also sponsored by Senator Larkin, to create an additional special open hunting season for deer that will occur only after the close of all regular and special open hunting seasons end. According to the bill, this new additional special open hunting season must end by January 31 of the next succeeding year.

An insurance industry study concluded that, nationwide, over 150 people die each year due to deer induced traffic accidents. The direct economic damages from these accidents is approximately \$1.1 billion each year. In New York, there are approximately 10,000 annually reported incidents where deer are hit by motor vehicles. However, researchers maintain that the number is closer to between 50,000 and 70,000 each year because many collisions go unreported.

The Insurance Information Institute estimates that each deer accident costs approximately \$2,000 for each claim. Therefore, the property/casualty and personal injury claims caused by deer accidents in New York is at least \$20,000,000 each year and could be as high as \$140,000,000 each year.

The losses sustained by New York agriculture from deer browsing damage is also quite high. In the Hudson Valley, NYS Farm Bureau estimates that deer damage is approximately \$68 per acre or \$14.6 million annually. On a statewide basis, the total damage to the agricultural industry is approximately \$59 million each year.

With the surge in deer populations and the reduced numbers of individuals that hunt deer, Cornell University reports that other means of deer management need to be developed and instituted to stem the loss of life and property/casualty damage due to motor vehicle accidents and loss of agricultural crops.

These bills are one way in which deer populations, under the strict scrutiny of DEC, can be brought back to more manageable and self-sustaining numbers. Without instituting measures such as these, deer populations will continue to grow beyond the bounds of our current environment to sustain these populations. This will lead to further loss of human life, economic damage and more deer dying during winter seasons due to the lack of food.

The bills were sent to the Assembly.