

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION  
STAFF ANALYSIS  
2017-01**

**Title: YOUTH HUNTER SUPERVISION  
Date of Analysis: September 14<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**BACKGROUND/PROBLEM:**

The current law in Michigan requires that:

- an apprentice adult hunter (no hunter safety) must be accompanied by someone 21 years of age, or older who possesses the same hunting license.
- an apprentice hunter aged 10-16 years old (no hunter safety) must be accompanied by their parent, guardian, or someone designated by the parent or guardian.
- a hunter-safety certified hunter who is 10-16 years old must be accompanied by an adult 18 years and over.

The term “accompany” in Michigan law means “to go along with another person under circumstances that allow one to come to the immediate aid of the other person and while staying within a distance from that person that permits uninterrupted, unaided visual and auditory communication”.

This means that if a parent who has two older aged hunter-safety certified children, all three would have to hunt very close together, which may result in a less satisfactory hunt due to problems with concealment and range of motion on a shot. They could not legally be in separate blinds or on either side of a clump of trees since these would interrupt visual communication.

**RESOLUTION CONTENT:**

- This resolution would allow a young, but more experienced hunter to hunt a little further from the adult on private land only as long as they were in electronic (cell phone or radio) communications.
- On private land only, a minor who completed the following criteria AND is at least 14 years old would be permitted to hunt within a distance no greater than 660 feet from the parent or legal guardian, which permits uninterrupted electronic communication, and allows the parent or legal guardian to come to the immediate aid of the youth.
- Youth hunter must have completed all of the following criteria:
  - Has successfully completed a certified hunter safety program.
  - Has been properly licensed and been supervised hunting for at least 20 hours in each of the immediately preceding two hunting seasons.
  - The parent or legal guardian of the youth hunter must submit a signed affidavit at the time of the youth hunter’s license is purchased stating that the applicant has completed at least 20 hours of supervised hunting in each of the immediately preceding two hunting seasons and that the youth hunter was properly licensed in the immediate two preceding seasons.

**MUCC CURRENT & PAST POLICY STANDINGS:**

- In 2010, MUCC approved a resolution to support the creation of the Mentored Youth Hunting Program, which allowed for mentored hunting of youth under the age of 10.
- MUCC has had long standing support of the Michigan Hunter Safety Program
- No other directly related policy on the supervision of youth hunters

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION:**

- Current law does not acknowledge the different developmental levels that youth hunters are at, and there is no mechanism that relates these levels to the amount of supervision necessary.
- Would recognize the importance and value of higher education and experience in youth hunters.
- Currently, even hunting on either side of a clump of trees is not legal for a youth hunter and parent to do because the visual communications are impeded. This may reduce the quality of hunting for the youth hunters and may make a parent or guardian choose between siblings on who gets to participate.
- In terms of the license purchase at the retail location, each time you sign your own hunting, fishing, or fur harvesting license (or that of your youth hunter if you are a parent or guardian) you are already signing an affidavit that you or that youth qualifies to hunt according to state law and this resolution would not be asking for anything more than that to ensure these requirements are met.
- By requiring 20 hours of hunting experience, the youth has likely experienced the emotions of seeing or taking game.
- Potential increase in youth hunter participation levels.

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION OF RESOLUTION:**

- It would be difficult to enforce and will cause increased safety concerns.
- Electronic communication can fail due to loss of power (batteries) or weak signal strength.
- 660 feet is well over two hundred yards making immediate aid to the youth difficult.
- Potential increased costs to create an affidavit for the adults to affirm the youth had the required time in the field.

**POSITIONS:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: the Department of Natural Resources

NEUTRAL: