

Proposed Resolution #F
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Erik Schnelle, Michigan State Council – National Deer Association
Proposed: December 2, 2023 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: Support For Expansion of Venison Donation Programs

1. **WHEREAS:** Sportsmen and Sportswomen as well as non-hunters in the state of Michigan have
2. supported the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger (MSAH) organization and its program since its
3. inception in 1991, and;
4. **WHEREAS:** the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) is one of the founding groups who
5. fostered the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger organization and continues to be involved and
6. represented on the board of directors for the MSAH, and;
7. **WHEREAS:** the mission of the MSAH is to provide ground venison to state-recognized non-profit
8. food banks, shelters and pantries providing food assistance to the hungry of the state of Michigan
9. through donated deer from hunter and deer management programs and the processing of those
10. deer by MSAH participating processors, and;
11. **WHEREAS:** from 1991 to 2020 an estimated 831,519 pounds of ground venison has been
12. provided to Michigan-based non-profit food banks, shelters, and pantries to create up to
13. 3,326,076 hot and high in protein meals through the combined effort of the MSAH and the
14. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and;
15. **WHEREAS:** Michigan has a need to harvest more antlerless deer in many parts of the state yet
16. 75% of the states hunters won't shoot an antlerless deer, only 17% of the states hunters take one
17. antlerless deer and 8% of Michigan's hunters take more than one antlerless deer, and;
18. **WHEREAS:** Most hunters have a freezer and annual venison eating capacity, and;
19. **WHEREAS:** Hunter numbers have declined for over 20 years, and;
20. **WHEREAS:** Antlerless harvest has declined by about 28% over the last 20 years, and;
21. **WHEREAS:** The state's remaining hunters will need to harvest more antlerless deer than they
22. ever have to manage our deer herd at healthy levels, and;
23. **WHEREAS:** the wild game processors working with the MSAH are being paid at rates far below
24. current market rates, and;
25. **WHEREAS:** On September 14, 2023, the Michigan DNR mandated that all deer donated to
26. MSAH that were harvested from counties with known Bovine Tuberculosis or Chronic Wasting
27. disease and found negative for those and that all venison donated in Michigan must be tested for
28. lead, and;

29. **WHEREAS:** Disease testing timeframes can vary from 2 to 6 or more weeks and most processors
30. do not have adequate freezer space to hold donated deer or venison while waiting, NOW;
31. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** that MUCC work with the DNR and legislature to ensure that
32. MSAH, or any other state-sponsored venison donation program have the funds and policies
33. necessary to efficiently test and distribute venison to the states-hungry, to expand the program to
34. processors in every county in the state, to compensate processors for donated venison at
35. annually adjusted market rates, ensure that processors have adequate storage space for donated
36. venison while waiting for test results, (in some cases this may mean providing seasonal
37. refrigerated trailers or freezers), and that they are compensated for the necessary additional
38. mandated lead, CWD and bTB testing work, and;
39. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** that MUCC continue to work for programs, which could include
40. license fee rebates, to encourage venison donations from hunters and donations from culling
41. programs.