

Ashley Witkowski  
Southwest Harbor  
LD 1438

To the esteemed committee of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,  
My name is Ashley Witkowski and live in Southwest Harbor on Mount Desert Island and I support the passage of LD1438.

To be more precise, I live in the Manset/Seawall area, which is arguably the area most overrun with deer on the entire island.

I have lived in my house with my husband and two children for nearly 11 years and have watched the deer population absolutely explode. For the first 5-6 years we were able to walk around our entire yard barefoot all summer long. In that entire time we had never once found a tick on any of us after being out in our yard. Back then we didn't even consider the deer much of a nuisance.

But things have changed. Drastically. Since 2019, we have sent in about 5 ticks per year for testing, all of them found on us after playing in our yard.

Long gone are the days of walking barefoot in our yard. My children actually now refuse to play in our yard at all due to it being a constant minefield of deer droppings, no matter how much we try to keep on top of cleaning it all up.

I have grown flowers, lettuces and herbs in containers on my front porch every year that we have lived here and up until 2 years ago they had been entirely left alone. We have had to install a gate at the top of the steps to keep the deer off the porch. We even had one bed down on our porch during a snowstorm this past January. We have a fenced in garden in the backyard that they never used to jump but now they hop right over and feast.

There are people in the neighborhood feeding them by hand and by the bucketful, so they have no fear of humans anymore. Multiple times last summer I had a deer literally walk right up to me and my children while we were gardening in our backyard.

While I understand the concerns of many of my fellow community members, many of the people I've spoken to that are against allowing a deer hunt also had no idea that hunting for other animals is already allowed on the island.

I do think allowing a deer hunt is the solution to bringing their population back into balance and I urge you to pass this bill.