

144 Church Road
Davidsville, PA 15928
June 7, 2007

The Honorable Edward G. Staback
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
225 Irvis Office Building
PO Box 202115
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-2115

Dear Representative Staback:

Representing the more than 20,000 members of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation I would like to comment on House Bill Number 251 sponsored by Representative Godshall. This bill as would allow hunting near baited areas. The Pennsylvania Chapter- NWTF opposes, under any circumstances, the use of bait or artificial feed for the purpose of hunting wild turkeys. We are therefore deeply concerned about potential problems posed by this proposed legislation. In addition, most of our members are deer hunters. A recent survey indicated that 3 out of 4 Pennsylvania hunters do not support the use of bait for hunting. It is safe to assume that our members have similar opinions.

Baiting and artificial feeding tend to concentrate wild animals into smaller areas, possibly increasing vulnerability to illegal harvest, increasing the potential for disease transmission and resulting in habituation of wildlife to people. Baiting can affect normal wildlife movement patterns and may negatively impact hunter success on adjacent lands where baiting is not practiced. An increase in overall hunter success associated with baiting and allowing hunting close to artificial feeding stations could result in lower bag limits and reduced season lengths, restricting recreational opportunity for hunters in the long run. Surveys indicate that nearly 85% of the public is supportive of hunting as long as the principles of fair chase are practiced. The general public perceives baiting to be unfair. The public perception of hunting and of hunters could be negatively affected were this bill to become law.

For these reasons, the Pennsylvania Chapter-NWTF is opposed to House Bill 251 and we respectfully request that you withdraw your support for the bill and that it not be released from committee.

Yours in conservation,

Gene Alwine, President
Pennsylvania Chapter- National Wild Turkey Federation