



NEWS From
Assemblywoman 138th Assembly District

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Assemblywoman DelMonte's bill to legalize crossbow hunting passes both houses

Bill to be sent to governor for his signature

A bill introduced by Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte (D-Lewiston) passed both the Assembly and Senate that lays the groundwork for legalized crossbow hunting in New York State (A.924-E/S.6793-B). Current law only allows longbows to be used for bow hunting while crossbows are solely permitted for certain physically disabled hunters; however, that limits certain hunters - such as seniors and veterans with disabilities - from bow hunting because longbows can be prohibitively heavy.

"Hunting is an important recreational activity and wildlife management tool and we should be expanding the opportunities for those who wish to hunt but are physically limited from doing so," said DelMonte. "Denying certain hunters a tool that can allow them to continue a beloved pastime just doesn't make sense to me, and that's why I believe the state should legalize crossbow hunting."

DelMonte's legislation requires acceptable crossbows to use 14-inch and longer arrows and include a working safety. The bill would also empower the state Department of Environmental Conservation to establish a crossbow hunting season to coincide with rifle hunting season and allow crossbow use on private property during any deer-hunting season. She said states that embrace crossbow hunting, including Georgia, Michigan and Ohio, appear to benefit from the activity's merits, as it's an environmentally sound recruitment and retention tool for hunters. Only two states ban crossbow hunting - New York and Oregon.

"It has been more than 20 years in the making, but finally New York State has joined with 48 other states and legalized the modern crossbow," said Bill Hiltz Sr., president NYS Crossbow Hunters Assn. "Thanks to the determined efforts of Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte and Senator David Valesky, New York residents can enjoy the challenges of using a crossbow, if they so wish. The horizontal bow will be most welcomed by the youth, women, elderly and physically challenged of our state. The crossbow is just another safe way to hunt!"

"Hunting brings nearly \$1 billion annually to New York and is a critical contributor to our economy and culture," DelMonte continued. "This bill maintains safety while catering to a wider array of hunters. Hunting access will improve, and a broader variety of hunters will only improve appeal, helping generate needed revenue while attracting tourists to the Niagara region."

DelMonte recently held a press conference in Albany to urge for the bill's passage. She was joined by a bipartisan group of legislators, the Safari Club, the NYS Conservation Council, the Niagara County Federation of Conservation Councils and SCOPE. The bill is the latest in a long line of sportsmen-minded measures DelMonte has supported in recent years, including:

- Ch. 344 of 2008 - a law granting big-game hunting privileges to 14- and 15-year-olds in New York State as long as they're supervised by an experienced hunter;
- Ch. 600 of 2005 - a law allowing sportsmen to use rifles to hunt deer and bear in 11 upstate counties; and
- A.3270 of 2010 (passed the Assembly) - a bill that would create the Empire State Fishing Trail program to capitalize on the state's emergence as a top bass fishing destination.