



MINNESOTA DEER HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

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Protecting the future of deer and deer hunting through Habitat, Education, Advocacy and Legislation

February 25, 2026

Minnesota House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy
Minnesota House of Representatives
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chair Heintzeman, Co-Chair Fischer and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association and our 20,000 members across the state, I am writing to express our strong support for the continued full inclusion of crossbows within Minnesota's designated archery deer hunting seasons.

Minnesota has a proud heritage of conservation rooted in responsible hunting and sound wildlife management. Ensuring that hunting opportunities remain accessible, inclusive, and aligned with modern equipment and hunter participation trends is essential to sustaining that legacy. Crossbows represent an important and appropriate tool that allows more Minnesotans to participate safely and effectively in archery seasons.

First and foremost, crossbows expand participation. Many hunters face physical limitations due to age, injury, or disability that make the use of traditional vertical bows difficult or impossible. Crossbows provide these individuals with a meaningful opportunity to continue participating in archery hunting and these individuals should not be required to take extra steps such as receiving a medical exemption in order to do so. Retaining experienced hunters in the field strengthens our conservation community, preserves mentorship traditions, and maintains license revenue that directly supports wildlife management.

Additionally, crossbows serve as an important recruitment and retention tool for new hunters. The learning curve associated with traditional archery equipment can be steep and discouraging for beginners. Crossbows offer a more approachable entry point, helping introduce new participants to archery seasons while maintaining the close-range, ethical harvest principles that define archery hunting. As hunter numbers decline nationwide, Minnesota must embrace tools that help reverse this trend and secure the future of conservation funding.

From a wildlife management perspective, crossbows are a highly effective and appropriate tool that aligns with the intent of archery seasons. Crossbow hunters operate under the same seasonal timelines, bag limits, and proximity requirements as traditional archers. Their effective range remains relatively limited compared to firearms, ensuring that archery seasons continue to provide a unique, low-impact harvest opportunity that helps manage deer populations responsibly.

Importantly, many states, including Minnesota, have already fully integrated crossbows into archery seasons without negative biological impacts. These states have demonstrated that crossbow inclusion does not undermine wildlife management goals or diminish traditional archery participation. Minnesota can confidently continue to follow this proven model while maintaining its commitment to sound science-based management.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources relies on hunter participation as a cornerstone of its conservation model. Expanding access through crossbow inclusion supports hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation, which is essential for maintaining sustainable wildlife management funding. License revenue and federal matching funds generated by hunters support habitat restoration, wildlife research, and conservation programs that benefit all Minnesotans.

It is important to emphasize that crossbows do not replace traditional archery equipment; they complement it. Many hunters continue to use compound and recurve bows out of personal preference and tradition. Crossbows simply provide an additional option that broadens participation while preserving the integrity and spirit of archery hunting.

The Minnesota House and specifically the Minnesota House Committee on Environment and Natural Resource Finance and Policy have long demonstrated leadership in protecting Minnesota's natural resources and outdoor heritage. Supporting the continuation of full inclusion of crossbows within archery seasons represents a thoughtful, balanced policy that strengthens conservation, supports hunters, and ensures the continued vitality of Minnesota's hunting traditions.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support legislation that fully includes crossbows within designated archery seasons indefinitely. This action will promote inclusivity, support conservation funding, and help ensure that future generations of Minnesotans can continue to experience and contribute to our state's rich outdoor heritage.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to Minnesota's natural resources.

Sincerely,

Jared J. Mazurek

Jared J. Mazurek
Executive Director
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association