

April 11, 2019

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Deer Population Control

Dear Governor Cuomo;

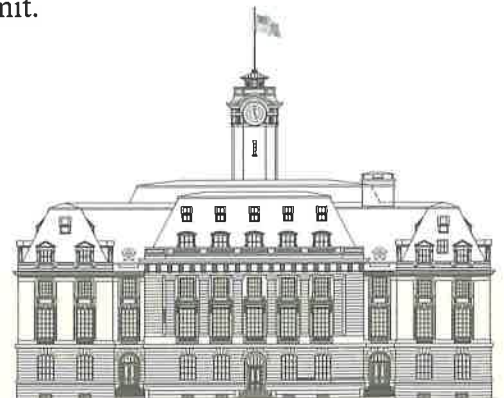
I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing to ask for your assistance in controlling our borough's deer population by permitting a professionally administered bow and arrow cull in Staten Island's New York State parks.

With the absence of any other natural predators, our burgeoning population of white-tail deer presents three distinct problems: two immediate and one longer term. Of immediate concern is 1) the marked increase in the incidence of Lyme disease among Staten Island residents, and 2) the ever-increasing likelihood of a deer-vehicle collision which could result in the death of a human being.

The third and longer-term problem is even more intractable: the death of green spaces and forests in this, the Borough of Parks. Much of the damage currently being done by over-grazing could take centuries to undo. Even the U.S. Forest Service recognizes that "white-tailed deer overabundance has become a serious forest health issue."

As you may be aware, the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio has chosen to deal with this problem by utilizing a "trial" program involving darting and tranquilizing bucks, and then performing a vasectomy on them. Without getting into details, this program allows the city administration to take a non-lethal deer management approach and, for the foreseeable future, avoid the issue of culling. Yet biologists are telling me that in the absence of natural predators, culling is the only truly effective method to control deer populations. In counties throughout New York State, culling is administered routinely with a DEC permit.



But sadly, this vasectomy method, which has never before been tried, is unproven, and worse – it is an abysmally slow process. Bucks may live for a dozen years after the procedure, and while they will not be pro-creating, they most certainly will be eating – and destroying – our forests and parks.

For the sake of sparing adults and children from the ravages of Lyme disease, for the sake of wary Staten Island motorists, and for the stake of greenspace loving naturalists everywhere, I am asking you to please step in and do what no one else in a position of authority seems to want to do. That is, address this problem in the practical and pressing manner which it rightly deserves. The problems are real and immediate; I do not believe this is the time or place for “trials” of unknown efficacy.

I believe that even the briefest of conversations with members of the New York State Department of Parks will convince you of the urgency of this problem. I respectfully request that you direct the appropriate member of your staff to contact me at their earliest convenience, so that we might further discuss how and when such a cull might be planned and ultimately implemented.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

P. S. Gov, I hope you have recognized from the budget process. you know all too well government often acts only after a tragedy. I'm afraid we are on that path on Staten Island with the deer issue. The ecological devastation is already underway. The spread in anecdotes of Lyme Disease impacting families is demonstrable. Forging in our head lights (forgive the pen) is a fatality via a collision with a deer. The city's vasectomy program, if it were one day, is not addressing the concerns of here and now. I fear what happens if we don't act now. Help!

Thank you!