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STATEMENT BY NYAMA CONCERNING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AT NY'S AIRPORTS

The New York Aviation Management Association (NYAMA) is urging New York State to reinstate permits issued under very limited circumstances that would allow for the continued use of safe and proven wildlife control methods by trained professionals at and around the state's airports.

State law prohibits the shooting of deer by hunters with a rifle in Long Island and Westchester County. Thus far, the state Assembly is not willing to grant authority to the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to continue to issue waivers from this restriction for airport wildlife management efforts. That leaves shotguns, a less effective tool, as the sole firearm method to remove the threat of deer.

In addition, unlike the Senate bill, the Assembly bill would not permit the use of a firearm within 500 feet of a residence or occupied structure, possessing a loaded firearm in a vehicle and shooting from the side of a road—all important techniques for effective deer, fox, coyote and bird control at airports.

Even though permission for these activities had been granted in New York and restricted to professionals trained in marksmanship and wildlife management for decades without incident, the Assembly remains opposed to allowing the DEC to continue to grant this permission.

Despite having had these tools, deer, birds, coyote, woodchucks and other animals large and small continued to get onto our runways. The airport managers and the pilots who fly in and out of these airports are worried that these new restrictions will increase the potential for more aircraft-wildlife collisions.

About 90 percent of bird strikes take place at or near airports, usually while taking off or landing and there were 898 collisions between aircraft and white-tailed deer in the United States from 1990 to 2010. According to the FAA, each year in the United States wildlife strikes to U.S. civil aircraft cause about \$718 million in damage to aircraft and about 567,000 hours of civil aircraft down time. For the period 1990 to 2011, over 115,000 wildlife strikes were reported to the FAA. About 97 percent of all wildlife strikes reported to the FAA involved birds, about 2 percent involved terrestrial mammals, and less than 1 percent involved flying mammals (bats) and reptiles.

NYAMA and our aviation partners are urging elected legislators and administration officials to recognize the critical need to address this issue in a timely manner and to continue to work together to safeguard the flying public.

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