U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

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RE: PUBLIC MEETING

RESIDENT CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT

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6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Ramada Inn & Conference Center
999 U.S. Route 1, South
North Brunswick, New Jersey

BEFORE:

DAVID J. CASE, Case & Associates

RON W. KOKEL, Wildlife Biologist
MR. CASE: I think we'll go ahead and get started.

My name is Dave Case. I'm the facilitator for tonight's meeting. I would like to welcome you and thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to be here.

The process we'll follow tonight is similar to the last meeting we had two years ago in Parsippany.

First I'd like to introduce a few people.

From the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Paul Casselli, the supervising Wildlife Biologist for the Department; Ted Nichols, Wildlife Biologist; Larry Hardy, the Division of Wildlife Management; and Brian Swift from the New York Department of Conservation.

There is also a number of other state biologists. They are in town for a meeting dealing with the Canada goose issue. A number of them are sitting up front. If you happen to be from
Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or Delaware, come up front and talk to a representative. George Hass is the migratory bird coordinator in the Massachusetts regional office and handles permits.

We'll have some time after the meeting, if you have specific questions, come up and talk with these folks.

The purpose of this meeting is to get your comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has prepared on resident Canada geese.

Ron Kokel will give a presentation, an overview of the EIS and the proposed alternative by the Fish & Wildlife Service.

As you came in, you received a card with a number on it. We'll ask people to come up one at a time. I'll call your number and go to the next number if you don't jump up right away. State your name and spell your last name to make sure we get it correctly. Albert is the court reporter
and he's capturing everything that is said tonight as part of the public record.

If you represent an organization officially, let us know that and where you are from. Please remember to spell your last name. The process again is to get your comments. I apologize in advance, there are a lot of people here tonight. We expect more to come in to speak. If anyone goes too long, I'll ask you to hurry along so everyone can speak tonight.

I'll pass around sign-up sheets. If you want to receive a copy of the final impact statement, please sign-up. If you received a copy of the first one, that means you are on our list already and note that, but sign-up again. We want to make sure we don't send you two copies, they are pretty thick. If you haven't received a copy, but want to receive a copy, just check that box as well. We want to make sure that everyone that signs up gets a copy.

Again, I'll start by introducing Ron Kokel, Waterfowl Biologist with the U.S.
ROB KOKEL: Good evening everybody. I am Rob Kokel. I'm with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Migratory bird Management. I'm stationed in Arlington, Virginia. And on behalf of our Director Steve Williams, I'd like to welcome all of you that are here tonight.

This is the ninth of eleven public meetings that are being held across the country for the purpose of developing public participation and input into our process of developing an environmental impact statement on resident Canada geese. The DEIS was developed in full cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services.

First, why are we here? Well, we're here to explain the environmental impact statement, it's proposed action, and to listen to your comments. The Draft Environmental Statement considers a range
of management alternatives for addressing expanding populations of resident geese. And, as such, our main purpose is to listen to you and to invite your comments on what our recommended actions are.

First, a brief explanation of the National Environmental Policy Act; or NEPA. NEPA requires completion of an EIS to analyze environmental and socioeconomic impacts that are associated with any Federal significant action.

Second, NEPA also requires public involvement including a scoping period before the draft is issued and a comment period after the draft.

We began this process in August of 1999 when we published a notice that announced our intent to prepare this EIS. Then, in February of 2000 we held nine public meetings across the U.S., in response to scoping designed to seek public input into this process. Scoping ended in March of 2000. One meeting was held in Parsippany.

In response to scoping, we received
over 3000 comments and over 1250 people attended the nine public meetings.

What did we find out during scoping? During scoping we found that the top issues of concern included several things: the property damage of conflicts caused by resident geese; the methods of conflict abatement; sport hunting opportunities on resident geese; the economic impacts caused by resident geese; human health and safety concerns; and the impacts to the Canada geese themselves.

NEPA also outlines a specific format for an environmental impact statement. There's a purpose or needs section; an alternative section; an infected environment section and environmental consequence section.

What are we talking about when we're talking about resident geese? In the EIS we define resident geese as those geese which nest within the lower 48 states in the months of March, April, May or June or reside within the lower 48 states in the
The purpose of the EIS was three-fold. One, to evaluate alternative strategies to reduce, manage and control resident Canada goose population in the U.S.; second, to provide a regulatory mechanism that would allow state and local agencies, other Federal agencies and groups or individuals to respond to damage complaints; and third, to guide and direct resident Canada goose population management activities in the U.S.

The need for the EIS was two-fold. First, increasing resident Canada goose populations coupled with growing conflicts, damages and socioeconomic impacts that they cause has resulted in a reexamination of the Service's resident Canada goose management.

The draft environmental impact statement examines seven management alternatives. First alternative, alternative A, is no action. That's the baseline to which everything else is compared. Alternative B, is non lethal
control and management which includes only non federally permitted activities. Alternative C, is non lethal control and management which includes some federally permitted activities. Alternative D, expanded hunting methods and opportunities. Alternative E, integrated depredation order management. Alternative F, the proposed action which we term State empowerment. Alternative G, the general depredation order.

Under the first alternative, the no action alternative, no additional regulatory methods or strategies would be authorized. We would continue the use of all hunting seasons on resident geese. The issuance of depredation permits and the issuance of any special Canada goose permits.

Under the second alternative, the non lethal control and management which includes non federally permitted activity, we would cease all lethal control of resident Canada geese and their eggs. Only non lethal harassment techniques would be
allowed. No permits would be issued and all special hunting seasons would be discontinued.

The third alternative, the non lethal control and management which includes federally permitted activities, would cease all permitted lethal control of resident Canada geese with several exceptions. One, we would also promote non lethal harassment techniques. There would be no depredation of special Canada goose permits issued. Egg addling would be allowed with a Federal permit and special hunting seasons would be continued.

The fourth alternative, expanded hunting methods and opportunities. Under this alternative we would provide new regulatory options to increase the harvest of resident Canada geese. We would authorize additional hunting methods such as electronic calls, unplugged guns, and expanded shooting hours. The seasons could be operational during September 1 to 15. They could be experimental if approved during September 16 to 30 and they would
have to be conducted outside of any other open season.

The fifth alternative we termed integrated depredation order management. This alternative actually consists of four different depredation orders. There's an airport depredation order; a nest and egg depredation order; an agricultural depredation order and a public health depredation order. Implementation of each of these orders would be up to the individual state wildlife agency. Special hunting seasons would be continued and the issuance of depredation permits and special Canada goose permits would also be continued.

Under the airport depredation order, we would authorize airports to establish a program which would include indirect and/or direct population control strategies. The intent of this program would be to significantly reduce resident goose populations at airports. Management actions would have to occur on the premises.
The second depredation order, the nest and egg depredation order, would allow the destruction of resident Canada goose nest and eggs without a Federal permit. The intent of this program would be to stabilize existing resident goose breeding populations.

The agricultural depredation order would authorize land owners, operators and tenants actively engaged in commercial agriculture to conduct indirect and/or direct control strategies on resident geese depredating on agricultural crops. Again, the management actions would have to occur on the premises where the depredation was occurring.

The fourth depredation order, the public health depredation order, would authorize state, county, municipal or local public health officials to conduct indirect and/or direct population control strategies on geese when recommended by health officials that there is a public health threat. Again, management actions would have to occur on premises.
The sixth alternative is our proposed action, state empowerment. Under this alternative we would establish a new regulation which would authorize state wildlife agencies or their authorized agents to conduct or allow management activities on resident goose populations. The intent of this alternative would be to allow state wildlife management agencies sufficient flexibility to deal with the problem caused by resident geese within their respective state. Under this alternative we would authorize indirect and/or direct population control strategies such as aggressive harassment techniques, nest and egg destruction, gosling and adult trapping and culling programs; and we would allow implementation of any of the specific depredation orders identified in alternative E.

Additionally, during existing special hunting seasons we would expand the methods of take to increase our harvest, as I explained under alternative D, such as additional hunting methods, electronic
calls, unplugged guns, expanded shooting

hours, -- these seasons could be

operational during September 1 to 15, again

they could be experimental during September

16 to 30 and they would have to be

conducted outside of other open seasons.

Additionally, we would establish a

conservation order which would provide

special expanded hunter harvest

opportunities during a portion of the

migratory bird treaty closed period, that

is August 1 to 31, and a portion of the

treaty open period, September 1 to 15.

Again, under the conservation order we

would authorize additional hunting methods

and these seasons would have to be

conducted outside of any other open season.

Under the program the Service would

annually assess the impact and the

effectiveness of the program and there

would be a provision for possible

suspension of regulations, that is the

conservation order and/or the hunting season

changes, when the need was no longer

present. We would also continue all
special and regular hunting seasons. We would continue the issuance of depredation and special Canada goose permits. The only state requirements under the program would be to annually monitor the spring breeding population of resident geese and annually report take under authorized activities.

The last alternative we termed a general depredation order. Under this alternative we would allow any authorized person to conduct management activities on resident geese that are either posing a threat to health and human safety or causing property damage. This action would be available between April 1 and August 31. It would also provide expanded hunting opportunities as identified under alternative D. We would have continued use of special and regular hunting seasons and the issuance of depredation and special Canada goose permits. Authorization for all management activities under this alternative would come directly from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

We looked at two things under the
affected environment. We looked at the biological environment and the socioeconomic environment. Under the biological environment we looked at the resident Canada goose populations, water quality in wetlands, vegetation and soils, wildlife habitat and federally listed threatened and endangered species.

Under the socioeconomic environment we looked at the migratory bird program which includes a sport hunting program and a migratory bird permit program, social values and considerations economic considerations including property damages caused by resident geese, agricultural crop problems, human health and safety issues and the program cost.

The environmental consequences section forms the scientific and the analytic basis for comparison of all the different alternatives. It analyzes the environmental impacts of each alternative in relation to those resource categories that I just went over. And, again, the no action alternative provides a baseline for
all the analysis.

Under the no action we expect Canada goose populations to continue the growth that we are currently experiencing. In the Atlantic Flyway we expect the population to approach 1.6 million within ten years. In the Mississippi Flyway 450,000 within ten years. We would expect that there would be continued and expanded goose distribution problems and conflicts. There would be increased workloads and continued impacts to property safety and health.

Under our proposed action, we expect there to be a reduction in Canada goose populations, especially specific problem areas. We expect increased hunting opportunities; a significant reduction in conflicts; decreased impacts to property safety and health. While there would be some initial workload increases, as the populations decrease we believe that there would be long-term workload decreases, and above all the alternative would maintain viable resident Canada goose populations.

Some of the recent modeling that's
been done suggests that in order to reduce
the four Flyways' populations from the
current level of about three and a half
million down to the Flyways' goals of 2.1
million would require for ten years one of
these options: Either the harvest of an
additional 480,000 geese; the take of an
additional 852,000 goslings annually; the
nest removal of 528,000 nests annually or
the combination of an additional harvest of
240,000 geese annually and the take of
320,000 goslings annually. One of these
would have to occur each year for ten years
over what is occurring currently.

Thus, we believe the only way to
possibly obtain these kind of numbers is to
give states the flexibility to address the
problems within their respective state. To
address population reductions on the widest
number of available fronts. Since states
are the most informed and knowledgeable
local authorities on wildlife conflicts,
the primary responsibilities and decisions
should be placed with them.

What comes next? First is the
development of a new regulation to carry out the proposed action. This should be forthcoming soon. Second, is the public comment period on the draft environmental impact statement, and it ends May 30th; and, third is publication of a final environmental impact statement. The Service's record of decision and a final rule which we anticipate for this fall.

As I just stated, the public comment period is open until May 30th and I think Dave has already outlined some of the various methods that you can use to submit your comments. These include any oral or written comments that you may submit tonight and any that you may subsequently send in to us. The address is printed on the back of the card that you received when you came here tonight.

Additionally, we've set up an electronic site where you can send e-mail comments and access all of the other pertinent information to the EIS process, including the draft environmental impact statement. And on behalf of the Service,
I'd like to thank all of you for attending
the meeting, in particular those who will
submit comments tonight.

Thank you.

MR. CASE: Thank you, Ron. Again,
the process we will follow this evening.

If you'd like to give comments tonight,
we welcome that. If not, there is an
e-mail address on the back of your card.

We handed out cards as you came in and will
call you in the order you came in. If
you don't jump up, I'll go to the next
number. We ask that you come up to the
microphone so everyone can hear and our
court reporter, Albert, will be able to see
you. State your name and spell your last
name for us. If you represent an
organization officially here tonight, what
that organization is and where you are
from.

Again, there are some
handouts on the clipboard out there. If
you want a copy of the Environmental
Impact Statement, please fill that out.

I apologize in advance. There are over
80 people here tonight. Although it's a big room, there are quite a few of us. I apologize to everybody in advance, if you go a little too long, I'll ask you to hurry along. I would like to get started.

Number one. Number two. Three.

TED NICHOLS: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft environmental impact Statement regarding resident Canada goose management. Although resident Canada geese are a valuable natural resource, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, hereafter referred to as Division, concurs with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, hereafter referred to as Service, position that there is a need for action given the multitude of problems incurred by overabundant resident Canada geese.

Given the nationwide problem of overabundant resident geese, we believe a nationwide solution, where the federal government (for example, the Service) serves in the lead role, is warranted. As
such we do not concur with the Service that Alternative F, "state empowerment", should be the preferred alternative.

Based on the language in Alternative F, state empowerment, our agency would likely need to issue state permits to document the taking of geese. This alternative does not relieve the affected landowner of an already burdensome permit process. This alternative also transfers the one million-dollar cost of administering the permit program for managing this federal species, to the states without compensation. The Division believes the entire burdensome permit procedure, designed to protect against excessive take of a species, is unnecessary for resident Canada geese at this time. The resident goose population is twice the New Jersey and Atlantic Flyway population goals, indicating the need for population reduction, not protection. Given Alternative F in New Jersey with no additional funding, the Division would be forced to spread its already thin Wildlife Control Unit resources among conflicts involving black bears,
white-tailed deer, beaver, as well as other wildlife species, and now resident Canada geese.

We believe that the authority to act on problems associated with resident geese should be conveyed directly to the affected landowner through a federal, general depredation order. As such, the Division supports implementation of Alternative G, the general depredation order, with several amendments and clarifications. We believe this alternative, with our proposed amendments, provides the most flexibility to agencies and property owners to deal with goose and human conflicts. Alternative G frames the issue on a nationwide scale and transfers authority for action directly to the affected agency or individual.

New Jersey and other Atlantic Flyway states have repeatedly expressed the desire for a general depredation order that allows for nest and egg destruction and treatment as well as the taking of geese, subject to state guidelines, when geese are depredating
agricultural crops, creating threats to human health safety, damaging public or private property or creating a nuisance situation. Therefore, we recommend implementation of Alternative G with the following amendments and clarifications:

1. We recommend that the definition of an "authorized person" under the general depredation order be broadly defined to include virtually any property owner or manager that may be adversely affected by resident geese.

2. We would urge that damage, as defined under the general depredation order, be broadly interpreted. Grazing damage to vegetation as well as fecal deposition on lawns, walkways, docks etc., that diminishes aesthetics or conflicts with desired human uses should be included under the definition. This broad definition would address problems occurring from property damage and nuisance situations caused by geese.

3. The requirement that a non lethal harassment program certified by
USDA-Wildlife Services be implemented concurrently with the general depredation order is not acceptable. We are not aware of any wildlife services certification program that is currently in place, or how it would be implemented. Furthermore, non lethal approaches are often too costly and ineffective to be a reasonable requirement before other actions can be taken. Non lethal approaches also do little to address the underlying problem of overabundant geese. We believe that most people will choose non lethal measures whenever they are practical and effective, and we would continue to advise landowners to implement a combination of lethal and non lethal measures in accordance with integrated pest management principles.

As written, the general depredation order is limited to the premises where the problem is occurring. Geese associated with damage or other human related conflicts often occur on
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adjacent properties. For example, geese may fly though airport air space yet nest or congregate on an adjacent property off-site. Therefore, the scope of the general depredation order should be expanded to include adjacent properties as long as landowner permission is obtained.

5. Although we agree with the Service that expanded hunting opportunities are warranted to help reduce resident goose populations, the regulation changes proposed in Alternative G do not go far enough. Rather we recommend implementation of a conservation order for Canada geese be included in Alternative G. Specifically, the conservation order should allow for the take of Canada geese from August 1 to September 15, with no bag limits, unplugged shotguns, use of electronic calls and expanded shooting hours.

6. While Alternative G has an array of management actions needed to control resident Canada geese, we are concerned
that the reporting requirements may pose an unnecessary and undue administrative burden on both state agencies and the public.

In New Jersey, appropriate surveys and monitoring programs are in place to ensure that the resident Canada goose population will not be reduced below desired population objectives through implementation of a general depredation order and conservation order.

Thank you for your consideration of our agency's comments.

In closing, the Division wishes to thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for preparing the draft EIS. If the Division can assist in any way in preparing the final EIS, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Continued cooperation among affected partners is needed to resolve this difficult problem of critical importance to New Jersey and other U.S. citizens.

Thank you.

MR. CASE: Number four.
The New Jersey Fish and Game Council, hereafter referred to as Council, is by legislation, responsible for adopting and amending regulations governing the taking of wildlife which are legally classified as game birds, game mammals, furbearers or freshwater fish. The Fish and Game Council is one of six councils or committees created by legislation to work closely with the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, hereafter referred to as Division.

The Council consists of 11 members who are appointed by the Governor. Three members represent the agricultural community and are nominated through the State Agricultural Convention, six sportsmen representatives are nominated by the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. In addition, the chairperson of the New Jersey Endangered and Non-game Species Advisory Committee as well as one public member knowledgeable in land use management selected by the Governor serve on the Council.

Council members function as unpaid volunteers
who act in the best interest of the state's fish and wildlife resources on behalf of the public.

The Council, in concert with the Division and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulate the taking of both resident and migratory Canada geese in New Jersey.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft environmental impact statement regarding resident Canada goose management. Although resident Canada geese are a valuable natural resource, the Council agrees that there is a need for action given the multitude of problems incurred by overabundant resident Canada geese in New Jersey.

The Council concurs with the position of the Division regarding the preferred alternative in the draft EIS. Specifically, given the nationwide problem of overabundant resident geese, we believe a nationwide solution, where the federal government (for example, the Service) serves in the lead role, is warranted. As such, we do not concur with the Service that Alternative F,
"state empowerment", should be the preferred alternative.

The Council is concerned that Alternative F would require the Division to issue state permits to document all taking of geese. This alternative does not relieve the affected landowner of an already burdensome permit process. Rather this alternative transfers the cost of administering the permit program for managing this federal species, to the states without compensation. The Council believes the entire burdensome permit procedure, designed to protect against excessive take of a species, is unnecessary for resident Canada geese at this time. The Council believes that that administration of Alternative F by the Division is impossible considering their budget, their personnel and the need to concentrate their wildlife control efforts on non migratory species such as bears, deer and beaver.

We believe that the authority to act on problems associated with resident geese should be conveyed directly to the affected
landowner though a federal, general depredation order. Therefore, the Council supports implementation of Alternative G, the general depredation order, with the several amendments and clarifications, as outlined by the Division's comments. We believe this alternative provides the most flexibility to New Jersey agencies and property owners dealing with goose problems. In New Jersey, appropriate surveys and monitoring programs are in place to ensure that the resident Canada goose population will not be reduced below desired population objectives through implementation of a general depredation order and conservation order.

Thank you for your consideration of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council's comments.

In closing, the Council wishes to thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for preparing the draft EIS. If the Council of Division can assist in any way in preparing the final EIS, please do not hesitate to contact us. Continued cooperation among affected partners is needed to resolve this difficult problem of critical importance to
New Jersey's citizens.

Thank you.

MR. CASE: Number five. Six.

BARI FEINSTEIN: I'm a voter and taxpayer from Bergen County, New Jersey and I'm speaking on behalf of many other citizens, who could not be here today, but have signed my petition opposing Alternative F. I am also speaking as a representative of the New Jersey Chapter of the Coalition to Prevent the Destruction of Canada Geese. This is our position:

The draft EIS shows that our views, and those of a majority of scoping session comment writers, were acknowledged but dismissed because they disagreed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's premeditated goal of turning over it's congressionally-appointed responsibility for Canada geese to state wildlife agencies.

In the DEIS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service admits to having priority to the
opinions of state wildlife agencies, flyway

councils and wildlife services. These
agencies do not represent the public. They
represent themselves. Their opinions reflect
a vested economic interest in any policy that
liberalizes killing wildlife. Catering to
agency greed is an intolerable approach to
policy making.

The DEIS blindly asserts that
population reduction should be the basis for
the preferred management program. It is
remarkable that the closest thing to an
explanation given for choosing this
"approach" is the statement that the Service
"believes" it might mitigate goose problems.
This is an inadequate justification for such
drastic policy making. Indeed, Alternative
F is so poorly defined in the DEIS that the
statements made about its allegedly intended
impact, whether in absolute terms or
relative to other options, are meaningless.
Only one thing is certain: many geese will
be killed. I must ask, if the geese are
slaughtered what animal could be the next
victim? What are we teaching our children -
that problems can only be solved by
bloodshed instead of teaching them
compassion and respect for all living
things?

Population reduction
means killing. Killing not only affords
gratuitous economic opportunities for state
wildlife agencies (revenues from expanded
hunting) and wildlife services
(extermination programs), but it also gives
the Service an excuse to completely
disregard non-lethal management options in
its policy making. Non-lethal goose
management was inaccurately portrayed in the
DEIS as being of questionable utility while
population reduction was portrayed as being
of obvious utility. In reality, the reverse
is true. There is concrete precedent for
the effectiveness of non-lethal Canada goose
management in eliminating the impact of
geese. The same cannot be said about
killing programs -- but not for a lack of
trying.

Population data are presented in an
try to support the population reduction
plan concept. However, these data are incomplete, contradictory, and of inconsistent quality. Goose population trend assertions are highly speculative, and in some cases plain wrong.

According to the Service's own reports, the Atlantic Flyway population of "resident" Canada geese has hardly changed in four years. Is that what the Service considers an exploding population? Similarly, public health concerns are still cited, even though study after study confirms that geese are an insignificant public health issue. Some of these studies were even funded by the Service for the purpose of finding something from which an imaginary goose emergency could be fabricated. The Service continues its attempt to justify new regulations by relying on second-hand information and damage claims that have neither been confirmed nor evaluated based on any set of established standards. Most of the supporting data in the DEIS come from the special interest groups who will gain the most economically from the proposed
If the extermination plan, which is violent and cynical, is implemented it will have a negative impact on society. It will be wildlife management at its worst. Hunting will be allowed in parks and neighborhoods in the summer when people are hiking, picnicking, camping, etc. Adult geese and goslings will be killed on a large scale. More geese will be forced into areas where they are unwanted (private property, etc.) and people will be given false hope that killing will resolve goose conflicts. Bottom line is - there will be a blood bath, a completely unjustified and needless slaughter on a scale that's completely unethical. But even if you don't care about the inhumane aspect, round-ups don't solve the human-goose conflicts.

If the geese are in an area where they are unwanted, the available humane methods should be used to move them. Killing geese to rid the property of them is not only cruel, but counterproductive, because a new flock will move right in to fill the void.
There are clear and simple means of redistricting the population of geese, as simple as ReJex-It and other turf grass repellents that will deter the geese from an area. In addition, there are other humane methods that can be used as alternatives such as: barriers; habitat modification, clean-up projects and use of border collies. By implementing programs to discourage wildlife from areas where they are not wanted, we can effectively solve wildlife problems without resorting to lethal control measures.

Finally, we resent the fact that state wildlife agencies played a significant role in boosting the population of resident Canada geese from the 1960s onward, and in some cases, still do (DEIS, II-18). References provided in the DEIS show that these agencies predicted in the 1980s that goose conflicts would increase due to their propagation efforts. Yet the Service allows these practices to continue.

The state empowerment alternative would reward those (state wildlife agencies)
who caused whatever problems that exist with increased hunting revenues and Pittman-Robertson money. The resident goose controversy is clearly the willfully manufactured product of state wildlife agencies whose goal was to eventually demand complete life of death control of a migratory bird species. To adopt Alternative F would be to surrender to the demands of special interest groups.

In conclusion, it seems inherently unfair and cruel to kill animals when there are humane alternatives. Add the risks of hunting and extermination in public parks and neighborhoods and the threat it poses to the people who use and enjoy those areas and the ridiculous nature of the extermination becomes even more clearly ludicrous. There is also a Migratory Bird Treaty (1916), which would clearly be violated. Therefore we are asking that you adopt Alternative A, no action or a non-lethal management alternative. This would allow Canada goose conflicts to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service's important role in overseeing control of these birds would be retained. On a personal note - I am sympathetic to some people's complaints about Canada geese; however, we need to work together to come up with a solution that is morally and ethically sound. As Americans, we must continue to live up to our country's standard of ethics by implementing strategies that are humane. We can coexist with the geese.

Thank you for your time!

MR. CASE: Number seven.

MR. BAILEY: Ron Bailey from Ocean County and live right in the center of the Atlantic Flyway. I have a few brain storming ideas I would like to pass on.

I looked at all the proposals of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of the Interior had proposed. None are acceptable to me. Maybe the right one hasn't been shown, but I know from the past that brain storming in any type of operation, whether it be business or environment, it has to be done.
There are ways. I have several of my own ways that I have discussed with people from the Department of Interior before I started. I thought I could get one of these proposals as me, Ron Bailey, who is a duck and goose hunter. I'll be 70 years old in a couple of months.

What can we do? I say let's continue business as usual. Let's try to use brain storming.

I want to tell you a little bit of my qualifications. It's not egotism. I'm from the Dupont, I guess it's scientific community. I'm retired right now. I work for National Cancer Institute and what we do, we're trying to prevent the cancers before they start. My chore was chlorine. Why can't we do that with these Canadian geese?

I've been working since 1996 with Steve Aifr and different people from the refuge and didn't get any place. There are too many complications. John Does never come in, the regular hunter, there are no bridges they have established.
None of these proposals -- I'm not speaking for anyone, I'm speaking for myself -- again I think we have a long way to go before we propose another EIS. That's all I have. Thank you.

MR. CASE: Eight, nine, 10.

MR. CORNEY: John Corney. I'm representing myself, but I am also a trustee of New Jersey Waterfowlers Association.

Bottom line, I'm in favor of Alternate F with major modifications. Number one, it identifies the starting date to be September. That very easily could be pushed earlier to August.

I'm also in favor of the implementation of the U.S. Federal Wildlife Services immediately issuing a conservation order for RB geese nationwide. For the specific flyways, the Central Flyway, even though the statistical data doesn't show, there is really a major issue in the Central Flyway, for the Mississippi Flyway and also for the Atlantic Flyway.

As modification to Alternate F, I would like to recommend that within each one of
the respective Flyways, there are existing technical committees on which there are resident biologists where their background and knowledge is Canada geese. That the Atlantic Flyway, Mississippi Flyway in conjunction with the International Federation and a representative of the U.S. Federal Wildlife Service immediately initiate a combined study group. Bottom line is, just like we study the hell out of the white geese, we're going to do the same thing with the RB geese and we all know this has been a long-term management and sociological issue. Some people say even going back over 20 years. So if we are going to do something we might as well start immediately and get immediate results. The charge to the technical combined study group would be to come up with a combined recommendation in one year's time. In addition to the hunting aspects of Alternate F, include baiting. Period. We all know the difference between a teal, a green head, Drake or mallard and
Canada goose. Therefore the mortality would be very incidental if baiting was initiated. Bait worked for market hunter, it works for this particular issue also.

We need an extensive public relations campaign. All of the combined agencies of the departments of the United States should get together because right now they are totally disjointed. U.S. Federal Wildlife, USGS, U.S.D.A. seems to be split-end study groups going around splintered information available.

I'd like to give you a copy of Regent Seven off the Internet that's been in existence since 1998 and there is probably been less than 1,000 hits on this particular document which specifically addresses urban geese. With an associated link that takes one to the animal alliance of Canada, that also back in 1998 did a 90-page report, et cetera, et cetera.

We need combined immediate PR because the RP goose situation in the Continental United States is multi-faceted and we got to get the word out.
One additional item that hasn't been mentioned is this: How about reintroduction into the migration? We all know that primarily the South St. James Bay, at the same time the Ungover Group, the Alternate Impetegrums, so on, so forth, the numbers are fluctuating back and forth. At the same time we have an overabundance of RG geese in the continental United States.

Let's get creative. Geese motel. We have nets, we have bait. Let's take it from there. I would leave that to the tech committee. I think we would all like to see a very beautiful resource reintegrated back into migratory flyway patterns within the standard time frames that they used to breed, come down winter and at the same time return and really, that should be our ultimate objective.

Very quickly I would like to ask for some numbers because I cannot find the information. In the Alternative Flyway for 2001, how many RP geese are there? Also for Mississippi Flyway and also for New Jersey. Per the mid winter January 2002 mid winter
surveys, how many Canada geese are in the Alternate Flyway, Mississippi flyway and New Jersey? What is the percent of reduction that is desired being an objective for the Atlantic Flyway, for the Mississippi Flyway? It was identified that 10 years we would have X, we have Y, so on so forth. What's the drop dead date? There was a 50 percent recommendation back in, it was either 2000 or 2001, for the white goose issue. Well, we're still studying it with working groups, joint ventures, so on and so forth at the same time the white geese are still tearing up the meadows.

That's all I have to say. Thank you very much for your time and consideration and welcome to New Jersey.

MR. CASE: Eleven, 12, 13.

MR. TITTEL: Jeff Tittel, director of New Jersey chapter of the Sierra Club.

I'm here because there is sort of an alternative that's not there. Whether you pick A through G, one of the things that's missing seems to be habitat.

One of the biggest problems we have in
a state like New Jersey, we are creating a
habitat conducive for the over population of
geese. We over populate our woodland and
farm fields by cutting down trees and
destroying, repairing buffers, filling in
wetlands. We are creating more habitat for
over population. Detention basins and lawns
are really places for the geese population
to keep growing and growing.

Unless we start dealing with those
issues as part of any of the different
alternatives there, we are never going to
solve the problem. In order to really
manage the goose population we have to
manage our landscape and we're not doing
that. When you fill in wetlands and turn
them into detention basins, you
create nice ponds for the Canadian geese to
move to. As long as we put lawns around our
lakes and concrete, nice office parks with
ponds in front, we keep saying the over
population, geese create a water quality
issue.

As long as some lived on a lake, I
wondered which creates a water population
issue: Four hundred fifty houses with septic tanks leaking into that lake or two dozen geese on the lake. Holistically, to do a better job, otherwise we come up with more short-term solutions rather than long-term solutions and need better management of the lands.

MR. CASE: Fourteen.

MR. SWIFT: Brian Swift, representing the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. We concur with the comments made by Mr. Ted Nichols of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife.

MR. CASE: Fourteen, 15, 16, 17.

MR. BIRMAN: Phil Birman, resident of Elizabeth, New Jersey. I was moved by the article that was in the Star Larger. The reason I was moved, I love these animals. One loss, one removal from the environment, one Canadian goose is one too many as far as I'm concerned.

As far as how it affects our society, the way I see it it's detrimental, absolutely. What are we doing?

We're creating ethical issues,
practicing mathematical issues, religious
issues. Ethical issues - certainly life is
precious. We are setting a precedent,
unheard of consequences.

We see what's going on around us, 9/11
issues. Here we are doing something,
breeding a really terrible thing. Setting a
stage for sharp actions. Unwitting actions,
things that don't make sense.

If you do anything, do something in a
humane, sensible, loving way. There are
ways to do it like the last person said, the
one prior to the last one. Give it a little
time. Think about what you are going to do,
how you will do it and you'll get the right
results. Don't go ahead, what you are
doing, to cull and kill.

That is not the way. I have my personal
reasons over here. I'll read it off.

1. There is unreliable goose population
data, therefore one should not develop
policy based on statistically questionable
data. The exploding population is clearly
subjective.

2. Most of the negative claims about
geese are exaggerated claims that are never validated and nor seem to matter from those demanding such horrible killings.

3. Exponential population growth rate is another myth. It assumes that there are no other biological limiting factors.

4. Graphs and trends intent is to scare the public into accepting mass killing. It has little to do with statistics, banding, aerial survey than an inconvenience.

5. There are obviously ethical, pragmatic and religious issues that are against killing and culling of geese, animals, and any life. Ethically it is wrong to take any life in a humane and understanding society. Pragmatically it is wrong because it instills bad values and sets a precedent in society that killing is okay and can be used as a means to an end without seeking life saving sensible solutions, and regards that some forms of life is worth less using poorly founded excuses. Religiously it is wrong because many religious beliefs regard God's creation and life as sacred, precious that is to cherished and cared for.
6. Goose mess is not a health hazard because all it is recycled grass.

7. Game agencies are in the business of hunting opportunities which means they are not interested in stabilizing but increasing population to make hunting a big business to exploit the resident geese.

8. Killing of Canada geese is based largely on an illusory health argument per National Wildlife Health Center.

9. Killing of geese as justification is fraudulent.

10. There is a misconception that feeding causes problems. Instead geese use biological relevant criteria. This would help explain why the geese feed mostly in unpopulated areas such as golf course.

11. Migration of birds to northern and southern regions is discouraged because those areas are no-longer habitable due to waste, pollution and unsound ecological conditions such as fouled water.

12. Killing of Canada geese is a violation of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service "Migration Bird Treaty Act" and
Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Those that plan and kill the birds must be stopped, fined, and imprisoned.

13. Let us stop this killing and consider realistic humane solutions. My feeling is that we should be thankful that these birds are in our midst. Watching them makes me experience profound feelings that life is so beautiful evident by the birds' beauty, grace, love and care for its young, social concerns and pairing off of male and female. Note geese often mate for life, pine due to death, aggressive only when protecting their young, devoted parents, share food, help its kind in stress other species. They show a willingness to interact without causing harm and threat with us. Each bird may look the same but is unique just as human beings. They have the right to be here, should not be denied. Sprawl, environmentally unmindful industrialization and the twisted unfounded reasons imposed by human kind have caused the problems and threats.

Consider other options that do not kill or harm these beautiful birds.
A. Reduce clear cutting and intensively landscaped areas.

B. Use non-lethal goose control such as methyl anthranilate (Kool Aid).

C. Use habitat modification to control geese such as fencing near water areas that are restricted, and establish areas that are favorable for the geese where they can be safe and fed.

D. Use border collies to a limited degree.

E. Use turf grass goose repellents, flight control, It-It.

F. Goose D-fence.

G. Goose poop buster.

H. High Tech distress calls.

I. Robo goose.

J. Dissuader Hand-held Laser, Gater Guard.


L. Egg control, humanely, shake eggs that are two weeks or younger but not ones that float. Leave one egg in clutch to avoid another clutch.

Consider the realistic humane
solution. My feeling is we should be thankful these birds are in our midst, whether there is a smaller number or larger number. Watching them makes my experience, profound feeling, life is beautiful by the birds.

Social concerns, paring off of male and female. Geese often mate for life. This is something we can learn from. They are examples for us. We should not destroy something that is a good example to our social being.

As far as other things, they lose a mate, they grieve. They may be aggressive only when their young is threatened. It's understandable. Why would anyone be concerned, even about the droppings. This is recyclable. It's not a hazard, it's just overdone. People give you the impression it's a hazard. Everything I read up to now, there is no indications it's a hazard or a problem. It's the personal ego acts by individuals. People who want their total rights over their land.

Who was first here? Were we here
first or birds here first? Who. Let's show
a little grace, little kindness, little
love. That's all I want to say.

MR. CASE: Eighteen.

MS. HEINRICH: Helen Heinrich, and I'm
here to represent the farmers of North New
Jersey Farm Bureau. We have some 18,000
farm families. Their numbers and many of
them would be here except this is the time
of year when they are out in good weather
bringing in the hay and taking care of other
crops that have been delayed because of bad
weather, but wanted me to deliver some
information about our policies and problems
with the geese.

We will be sending you a written set
of statements, of comments from our
president later.

I wanted to make a few points here
because the farmers are people who
experience on a daily basis the problems
with the geese unlike the speaker just
before. Farmers are in a situation now
where their income is threatened for many
reasons, especially the field crop farmers,
with low prices and of course the weather.
The drought or too much rain or whatever.
And having the geese do damage to their
crops is just one more blow that is very
difficult financially and emotionally for a
farmer to withstand.

Farmers are working very hard to work
with watershed groups on non-point source
solution, improvement and the geese are
implicated in that. One of the crops that
they like to destroy the best would be
cover crop like winter wheat where they pull
the struts out so there isn't any wheat to
harvest there a little bit later this year
and in the meantime the soil is washed away.
We are working hard to keep that from
happening and the geese are setting those
efforts back.

They also destroy the edges of
streams. This causes soil erosion.

Last of all, many of our streams are
supposedly impaired with fecal chloroform.
That could come from many different sources,
but we see an awful lot of geese and we
think it's got to be ascertained, their
role, in terms of water quality problems too.

We tried to use non-lethal weapons, non-lethal methods, tried permits. We've put up with long tedious months of waiting for the permit from Fish & Wildlife Service and also participated in the 2000 scoping session and we are urging you to act. Let's have no more studies, no more delays.

Let's start working on this problem and we would favor action that accomplishes the most in the quickest period of time.

We favor Alternative G because we feel that this is the one that would provide the most flexibility. It would be something coming from the federal level that would apply to everybody and hopefully all of the problems. Whether it's to be done or not can be solved once for the whole country.

We refer you to Alternate F. You will have questions and challenges on 50 of them instead of just one.

We would like to see Alternative G with a tool box and as many tools as will do
the job, with the states able to choose and help the individual agencies or land owners deal with the most appropriate tools. This will be less burdensome and we think will get the job done more efficiently.

We are well-aware of the problem of money to manage these programs and to ask the local, the State Fish & Game agency to take on the burden without any additional funds. It's going to, as they said, increase the spread of their staff across the bear problems, beaver problems, white tail deer as well as the geese. Farmers are suffering from all those animals. We don't want to see any reduction on their ability to take on these problems.

We would like to see you follow through with Alternate G as soon as possible. We do feel very impressed with the way New Jersey monitors and surveys its geese and we think certainly you and the State agency working together within the flyway can keep monitoring the progress of the reduction and this will be beneficial not only to farm landowners, but also to the
resource itself.

Thank you.

MR. CASE: Nineteen.

MR. DRAKE: David Dranke. Extension wildlife specialist for Rutgers cooperative extension.

Like to applaud you for the comprehensive way you've looked at this issue. The relative quickness for which you administered and issued the Draft EIS. I fully concur with the comments and from the comments of New Jersey Fish and Wildlife. Thank you.

MR. CASE: Twenty.

MR. BAKER: I don't represent anybody except myself.

I come from a little town just north of here by the name of Livingston and the reason I decided to come was because I'm getting so sick and tired what these beasts have done to a typical suburban town. I'm sure it can be multiplied all over the state, all over the nation, that I thought I would at least come and say a few words from just an ordinary citizen, plain old taxpaying guy
that doesn't represent any of the bureaucratic groups.

I just think it's disgusting. There is a ballpark near where I live which can't be used half the time because it's constantly full of goose droppings. There was a beautiful park where the children used to play. They can't play now because now it's either full of filth or because the geese come in there and if the children go anywhere near the geese they attack the children.

Someone made the comment before that they only attack children when they are protecting their young. That's baloney. I've seen over and over again geese attacking children particularly when there is no baby around. I'm just making the point that who's more important?

We're in a state that's very, very crowded. I agree. We have a huge population in New Jersey and it continues to grow. Well, mankind comes before the beast, it's just that simple.

This guy doesn't agree with that,
that's his privilege. Mankind comes before the beast and I don't want to see my grandchildren try to go out in the park and have some disgusting goose jump on my grandchildren and bite it. You know, that's why I'm here. That's only a personal thing.

Adding all the other concerns, the problems at the airport that have been mentioned, the little old ladies that want to feed the birds, that's the ones that you guys are so concerned about. The farms as the lady mentioned, overwhelmed with geese. They are polluting the lakes as we know. I'm just repeating something that you all know, but I think it's worth repeating.

We have a small lake in my town, can't even be used anymore. Used to be used again by the children, can't be used anymore because it's full of goose turds. Nobody can use them anymore. If we do, knowing these blasted geese will grow and grow and grow and what are we going to do? We'll be talking 10 years from now before what we are going to do about it. We got to do something now.
Thank you very much for listening to me.

MR. CASE: Thank you. Twenty-one.

MS. FRITZGES: Teresa Fritzgtes. I'm speaking on behalf of the New Jersey animal rights and its 2000 members who oppose the killing of Canada geese by any method. We strongly object to Alternate F, which will turn over responsibility of Canada geese to state wildlife agencies. To do so in New Jersey will result in the same massive slaughtering as has occurred with white tailed deer.

While the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is not responsive to the wishes of the vast majority of the states residents, we hope the Federal Government will be. It is well-documented that the population of Canada geese has been manipulated for hunters.

According to a recent article in the Trenton Times, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife official indicated Canada geese were brought into New Jersey by hunters to attract migrating Canada geese. Now that some
people are complaining about their existence, there are plans to have the geese pay with their lives.

Canada geese have also been drawn to areas which people now want them removed. Wild geese visited waterways less visual to humans. Now they are drawn to corporate parks and golf courses with topography and vegetation that entice them. For those who do not choose to modify their grounds, droppings can be raked or swept up by equipment similar to street sweepers.

Non-lethal approaches work.

Each site should be evaluated and specific methods can be devised to deter geese. Some methods include prohibited sustained feeding, habitat modification, exclusion by national barriers or fences and non-lethal repellents.

The statement that Canada geese droppings is a health threat is unsubstantiated. In fact, there are no documented cases that Canada geese are common for human illnesses, the opposite is the case. Dr. Milton Friend, director of
wildlife health research center with all
fowl diseases of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Service in Madison, Wisconsin, has conducted
numerous studies on the issue and come into
contact with vast numbers of geese.

Despite such exposure, I pointed out,
"There is not a single documented case of
any of us coming down with any kind of
disease problem as a result of Canada
goose." Yet this myth is perpetrated much
like deer are responsible for lyme
diseases.

It is unconscionable that public
officials cry these scare tactics to justify
self-interest, increased revenues for
hunting and private and businesses. We ask
you adopt non-lethal methods. With
continued public education and non-lethal
approaches we are confident that those that
see Canada geese as unwelcome will co-exist
with them.

MR. CASE: Twenty-two.

MR. WHITTENDALE: Tom Whittendale.

Official comments are presented by
mail last week to the Service. We endorse
Alternative G with conservation order, the same as New Jersey and same as New York. That's also been endorsed by the Governors and Council on the Division of Wildlife.

MR. CASE: Twenty-three, 24.

MR. BRIDGES: After listening here I believe the real reason some people want geese killed is one, geese can fly; two, geese don't kill anyone; three, geese are beautiful; four geese are for life and faithful. These people want to kill geese in the hope it will ease their pain. Now the U.S.-let's-kill-more-fish-and-wildlife service wants to do how it knows how to do with animals, which is kill more.

I believe Bevis Singer was speaking to the geese and to us when he asks what could they know, all these scholars, all these philosophers, all the leaders of the world. They convinced themselves as man, the worse transgressor of all the species is the crown of creation. Thank you.

MR. CASE: Twenty-five, 26, 27, 28, 29.

MR. WEIDNER: Dave Weidner.
I thank the Fish & Wildlife Service for the opportunity to speak tonight. The owner of Storm Outfitters, we are a professional goose and hunting guide service. I want to make certain the voice of the sportsman is heard tonight.

All decisions made are based on sound biology and would like to encourage the members of the audience to please trust the fish and wildlife individuals as well as to support wetlands conservation, organizations such as Ducks Unlimited.

Please also remember that man has created this problem, much as the individual from the Sierra Club stated, due to habitat destruction, wetlands destruction. We really need to keep working on that.

I've looked over a lot, actually all of them and I have a lot of problems with all of them. I think some will work and some will not work. I think we need to increase the harvest limits based on sound biology. If possible we need to extend the season, the September season, if it's not going to impact on the migratory population.
To push it as far as possible without having significant impact on the megaureters into October.

To open it in August I don't think is going to do any good whatsoever. I think you're going to run into a lot of problems with recreational people who are sharing the same environment as a lot of the fowlers.

The other thing we might want to consider is to allow a spring hunt after the migratories have passed through. This is something I haven't seen too much about, but it seems if we can get a springtime to occur after the migratories have passed through and before any of the crops are placed into the ground, that might be something that would work as well. Again based on sound biology. Extend some of the zones in the State of New Jersey to include some of essential areas, if possible, that would, I think, significantly help.

I do not support the use of electronic calls, not support the use of unplugged shotguns, that's a safety issue.

Last, I would like to encourage some
type of program whereby there is a better mechanism or communication between farmers and sportsmen. Thank you for your time.

MR. CASE: Thirty.

MR. CASTELLANA: Doug Castellana, life long resident of New Jersey. Lived in Sussix County for the last 28 years. I live and represent the Lake Pokhung Outing Association, a small community around a 50 acre lake and 500 acres.

If what would facilitate our particular problem would be Alternate G, then I fully support our New Jersey Division of Fish & Game, Mr. Nichols with his suggestion that Alternate G be adopted and with a slight change to the authorized person being anyone, which, as he said, I would like to add or his agent.

I know a lot of elderly people who are having problems with geese on their property that would not do the undertaking. Thank you.

MR. CASE: Thirty-one, 32, 33.

MR. SANDS: Petersburg, New Jersey, Cape May County.
I thank the service for hearing all sides of this argument. I just want to point out to the service, they are walking a fine line and tarnishing their good name.

For 28 years I've been an outdoors man and the number one thing is conservation. Sponsor for Delta and Ducks Unlimited by going the route which is basically the slaughter of Canada geese. The notion of conservation, that's always been out by the service, starts to get muted.

To bring this as a way of "a hunting opportunity" creates a situation where people think this now is hunting. When I was growing up that was considered to be a slob hunter, an unwarranted slaughter. Whatever you got on the ground, start to inject that into hunting itself. Down the road, things like mallards became a problem. The excuse comes up again, wanton slaughter. People bring that onto themselves to think they have a reason to control something and it's okay to control geese so it's okay to control whatever else it is.

When you make your decision, my
personal opinion, stay with Alternate A, watch that fine line for the service, don't tarnish the good name U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has now.

MR. CASE: Thirty-four, 35, 36.
MR. BRODY: Joe Brody from Glouster County, New Jersey.

I just like to refute what the lady said, Canada geese were brought here by hunters to expand our hunting opportunities. They haven't been. They have been a natural renewable resource as long as New Jersey has been here.

Robert A. Mitchner's novel Chesapeake, read it and find out the Delaware Indians hunted the Canadians when they were here when the country was in the beginning years. Canada geese have always been here and I don't think we should kill them, we should harvest them. We shouldn't slaughter them, they are going to be here.

New Jersey, I've watched it from my childhood. We are losing more and more land, more and more habitat every year. It disheartens me. I grew up in south Jersey,
my grandfather was a farmer. His farms are long gone, there are apartments there. I'm losing more and more ground. I watch the turkeys, deer, ducks, geese. We lose it every year. It's our heritage.

New Jersey has always been known as the Garden State. Pretty soon it will be known as asphalt state. Nothing but apartments and housing developments from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean. It's breaking my heart to see that.

I realize we have a problem with the Canada geese. I don't think they should be rounded up and slaughtered like people are talking. Expand the hunting opportunities, try to control it like that. Very much in favor of the things Fish & Wildlife has done for us and the division. I think they have done a great job and hope they continue to do a great job to represent everybody, hunter and non-hunter and citizens of New Jersey.

That's all I wanted to say and I thank you.

MR. CASE: Thirty-seven, 38, 39, 40,
MR. TRONCO: Ray Tronco, Borough Councilman, Borough of South Plainfield in charge of Parks and Recreation.

One of the problems I have, representing a community of 22,000 people, is to try to get something done as one person trying to represent 22,000 people.

I can't tell you 22,000 people would support the New Jersey petition on this. I'm sure 99 percent of them would.

Constantly hear of the problem of the Canadian geese or Canada geese. Did a lot of research on it and realized unfortunately to get anything done you need to lobby hard. Unfortunately most of the lobbying is done on the Canadian geese side. It's such an epidemic, I'm not sure what the solution is. I strongly think too much time has been spent on it. It's a problem created by man in 1917 by adopting the treaty.

I looked at it. We have a couple of acts and changed it and modified it. Clearly something has been done. You can't take your kids to parks. We have a fishing
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darby in our lake. Kids fall and hurt kids, breaking an arm and slipping on the droppings. Get it in the vehicles, bring it into the house. Actually starting two years ago they're in my pool. They are defecating all over the pool, the sidewalk and pool, the lawn.

I honestly believe that New Jersey is overcrowded like probably every state is. Obviously we are growing everywhere. If I was the only home in South Plainfield, the Canadian geese would find my people. The problem is not overcrowding, although a problem in itself, but they are looking for where people live. They are not good neighbors, don't behave themselves.

How would you feel if your animal, your dog that is house broken went outside and went onto your neighbor's lawn and defecated and had to hire somebody to clean it up? I don't think we are looking at this quick enough. I think it's taken way too long. I don't want to see it get to the three million mark. There is eight million people in the State of any New Jersey,
probably find the lion's share want something done and done right away.

Don't ask me why they are not here or speaking up, but I can tell you I speak for South Plainfield of 22,000 people and sure most of them support the quickest response possible and F is probably the best act. Until you teach the Canadian geese to use a kitty litter box, I'm in support of that.

MR. CASE: Forty-five, 46.

MR. SWIGHERT: I live in Warren County. I'm in favor of Alternative G.

I believe that one of the items that was removed or not added to the hunting methods another gentleman mentioned was baiting. If there is an early season, we had one in September. It's the same at least in Northern New Jersey, I'm sure Southern New Jersey, that the crops really are not harvesting, which limits the area in which one can hunt geese. Without baiting, especially if we start in August, there will be a limited number of places to hunt that don't conflict with other people. I believe that baiting should be added. There would
There was a mention one reason it wasn't included, there would be a conflict with the hunting season, there is no other waterfowl season at the time of year in New Jersey nor a dove season as mentioned. We have no dove season.

I would add baiting to the allowed hunting methods.

MR. CASE: Forty-seven, 48.

MR. POVALSKI: Ray Povalski.

Life-long resident of New Jersey. Just a quick comment. I read through the different proposals and I would like to say, whether it's A, B or C, I believe one of those alternatives should be continued, but under no circumstance, I repeat under no circumstance should there be state empowerment over any other alternative.

And I say that on behalf of the other seven million residents of New Jersey that could or could not make it here tonight. I was not only dismayed, but quite disappointed to hear our own New Jersey Fish & Wildlife to go for either F or G, but to
add a laundry list of additional exceptions,
everything from the kitchen sink to every
other possible alternative to make it easier
for them and anybody else in the state to
take it upon themselves to solve this
problem. Of course they had the footnote
they didn't want the added financial burden.

Add that all up and add up the other
important factor the wildlife in New Jersey,
specifically the deer problem, can perhaps
be traced back to the wildlife management
techniques of the New Jersey Fish &
Wildlife. I believe no matter what remedy
we choose in your proposal, please, please,
please do not allow state empowerment of the
alternatives. Thank you.

MR. CASE: Forty-nine, 50, 51, 52, 53,
54, 55, 56, 57.

MS. RUSZALA: Cindy Ruszala. I really
came here to observe tonight, but I decided
to say a few things.

I work for Englehart in Woodbridge.

We have a lot of these geese around, but
after sitting in an office all day and
working, to me that's part of nature. When
I come out at lunchtime or at night or in the morning, it brings another side to everything that's going on in the world and everything that's going on in my life and that's part of nature. They do mate for life. I walk by them everyday. There is over 500 people in my company. They walk in and out at lunchtime. I never seen anyone be attacked. If they have a nest, yes. Walking I've never observed that. I'm working 12 years at this place.

I just don't think they should be slaughtered. I think there is a solution to every problem. I taught my children that. My children are grown now and they have always gone by that. Slaughtering or having the state takeover and do something is not the right approach. There should be more studies.

Maybe we can do something to stop the population from here. The birds that are here, they shouldn't do them. I seen the eggs are taken. That must be traumatic. They mate for life, that's better than humans in that respect. We need to learn to
exist with them and find a solution to that.

MR. CASE: Fifty-eight.

MR. LEE: Dave Lee. I'm a resident of rural Salem County and support Ted Nichols and Fishing & Wildlife's proposal, also support continued study of the misuse of sportsmen money by the Fish & Wildlife Service.

MR. CASE: Fifty-nine, 60, 61.

MS. BARRANTES: Claudia Barrantes. I came here with my friends. I'm representing myself tonight, but I work at Roy Weston Incorporated. Also to observe.

I'm a firm believer that conservation is the way to go. I try to follow the updates and what the division has offered in the past. I really love these animals and also understand what kind of impact they have posed on everyone, whether it be from businesses to regular people's lives.

But my opinion is that we should not slaughter these animals just to get rid of the problem. Life is too precious to go ahead and do that. I know we've spent a lot of time to try to resolve this matter.
You're going to create more problems by putting these ideas into our children and there's got to be other solutions.

I've yet to learn and see what kind of alternatives we might have, but I don't think we should go ahead and kill these animals. They are too precious. We should change the redevelopment of how we build our environment better so we don't invade the territories.

I've heard all night how different opinions that people have brought up. We can't all come to one conclusion. We have the disagreeing sides and the side that believes we should kill them. Something should be done. I don't have the answer, but hear to listen to everyone. Perhaps in a day, week or month we could come up with a recommendation. I thank everyone's time to listen to me and hopefully we can learn something from this. Thanks.

MR. CASE: Sixty-two, 63, 64.

MR. JANY: Steve Jany. I wear three hats tonight. One as a farmer, one as president of Mercer County Board of
Agriculture, and member of the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture.

State Board of Agriculture oversees the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the department sent a letter on April 29 supporting Alternate G.

After listening to Ted Nichols tonight, we also support his view and Fish & Wildlife's view.

As a farmer, geese have became a major problem. Used to be just in the small grains, wheat barrel rye and like that. Now they have became a problem in the corn and soybeans. They go down the row and nip off the crops.

If we can't make a living farming, then landowners that own land that rent to other farmers, they can't be farmed. It will be more than likely turned into more development. We don't need that. Alternative G would be good.

MR. CASE: Sixty-five, 66, 67, 68.

MR. EMBER: Steve Ember. I represent myself tonight.

This is not a management proposal,
this is a hunting proposal. The real problem is not the Canada geese. It's sprawl. It's the fact we take away the natural habitat and replace it with basically non-cultural habitat that the geese adopted to. I give them credit for that. It's unfortunate this occurred, but we've caused the problem. We are the ones with the grass lawns; we are the ones that refuse to landscape the grass lawns by putting bushes there and other vegetation that discourage the geese. We provide the habitat, we provide the food. If we feed, they will breed.

What's really behind this, it's really about money. Everything that you see is always about somebody making profit. Who profits here? Well, the gun industry, the hunting industry does. That's what's behind this. What they want to do is add to their list or at least extend the list of recreational hunting opportunities. They want to bring it into the suburbs. That's right, these geese are in the suburbs. They'll do it at night, find all kinds of
ways. Like they did in Princeton, they'll allow silencers. They've shown this before, they'll do it again.

Most wild animals would rather die than live with us. The few species that are willing to co-exist with us are viewed as pests and killed. First we take away their natural habitat and replace it with macadam. We don't like them, they are nuisances and kill all the wild animals. The result, we have a sterile environment, no more nature.

There's a dirty little tale about many people around here. You know who the best friends of the developer in New Jersey: Fish & Wildlife people in New Jersey. They are the ones that refuse to enforce the laws on stream encroachment, riparian lands, for threatened and endangered species. They are quick to give out permits, never educate the public about the danger associated with developing in these sensitive areas. They are the developer's best friend. They have great people in the division, all kinds of great biologists, great landscape projects that can be used for the public good. Why
don't they use it? I'm sure there is money involved. If there was enough investigation there might be some very interesting results. It's not just about the violation of the support hunting, it's about the profits.

I would urge you to stop seeing wild animals as the problem and start learning to co-exist with them. Solve the real problem which is sprawl, the loss of natural habitat. There are plenty of non-lethal solutions, other speakers mentioned it. I would not waste everyone's time to mention them again.

I would point out we need to protect the farmers. I'm very much for that. We should have feeding bans. People should not be feeding wild animals. That should be against the law. I would urge you to remember, if we feed they will breed.

MR. SPACE: Eric Space, life long resident of Sussex County. Wildlife damage control. To me, whatever alternative, doesn't matter to me. If you have depredation permits, let's speed up the
process. I see other goose companies. At
times you take six months to get permits.
Let's get them in a day or two. If I have a
problem with geese, it takes months to get a
permit. Months later doesn't matter, months
later the geese are done and the problem
isn't solved.

MR. CASE: Seventy, 71, 72, 73.

MR. MESSEROLL: John Messeroll,

president of Middlesex County Federation of

Sportsmens Clubs. I represent 30 clubs and

approximately 3500 men and woman that are

sportsmen of the Council.

We agree with the position of the Fish
& Game.

Monetary burden shouldn't be put on
individual states. As you stated, it's a
national problem that would not be solved
easily, but should be acted on with
expedience. Baiting and shotguns should not
be included in the issue.

You need to work on a good cook book
because there is going to be a lot of them
to eat.

MR. CASE: Seventy-three, 74, 75, 76,
MR. EVENER: Richard Evenger from Salem County.

I would like to thank the Fish & Wildlife for addressing the issue. I have been involved and trying to get something done with geese close to about 15 or 20 years.

Started out as a member of the board of health. I saw the first signs of how they started to deteriorate our water sheds and water quality. Watching it, it's getting worse now as more and more ponds are incapable of supporting fishing life because of this problem.

I would like to go along with Alternate G. I support the Fish & Game. I also listened very carefully to one wild fowler from Cape May County that indicated trying to associate the curing of a problem with hunting makes it kind of difficult.

If there is some way it could be done not to include it as a hunting, but as a method of stopping it, it will be greatly appreciated.
The only thing I like to say to some
of my friends, while I appreciate the
freedom of speech, I would like to have
facts instead.

MR. CASE: Seventy-eight, 79, 80.

MS. PASZAMANT: Carol Paszamant.

Life long resident of New Jersey,
specifically Middlesex County, which is
where we are right now.

We've heard representatives of a lot
of groups. One voice we haven't heard and
would not is that of the geese. We haven't
heard and would not is that of the geese
themselves. This is not due to any lack on
their part, but our inability to understand
them. They speak their own language and
have their own social norms.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife is supposed to be
constructive. It can back fire. It hasn't
worked for deer, it would not for geese.
Geese are highly un-intelligent.

All living things poop, even gentleman
from Livingston. There is no evidence this
posts a health hazard. They are
vegetarians. Little more than wet grass.
We invited them to stay with our land management and geese should not suffer. To round them up as they molt, to gather up whole families, mothers, children's fathers, to send them off to chambers to be gassed, these are nightmares no living creatures should have to endure and certainly not whole societies. It is immoral, horrible and unconscionable.

The anti-goose hysteria fanned by the media and those permit hunting or other methods of killing has exercised the zoophobia humans are prone to.

Humans exhibit extreme behaviors from feeding to killing. How about the median, no feeding, no kidding?

Find a use for the poop; examples, fertilizer.

All the geese would ask is to be left alone. They don't ask our friendship, but merit our respect. All good relationships are based on mutual respect. Let's show some other species which we share the planet with and maybe it will rub off and we'll have more respect for each other.
MR. CASE: Eighty-one, 82, 83.

MS. ROSENBAUM: Rose Rosenbaum. Hillsborough. And I have lived in New Jersey most of my life in several different counties.

To massacre the Canada geese should not be an option. Most Americans consider hunting to be unacceptable use of wildlife. Hunting is not a necessary management tool that controls animals and prevents overpopulation. The CDC states there is no evidence that supports any health issues with the geese. Why don't the people of New Jersey consider looking at what others are doing.

Rider University and the Wall Street Journal says no way to shooting. They use Goose Busters to control the population. The Dow Jones Company maintain clean stretches of land the old fashioned way. The town of Hamilton Chief of Staff say they got a Federal ranch to change the habitat so it doesn't attract the geese as well as sheep dogs to move the geese out. They don't think it is necessary to go in and shoot.
They say they are far more human than that. There are many sacred devices available and that can be used in conjunction with other alternatives.

MR. CASE: Eighty-four, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90.

Is there anybody here tonight that has not had a chance to speak yet that would like the opportunity?

If not, on behalf of the Fish & Wildlife Services, I thank you for taking the time out of your schedules to be here tonight and your concern for wildlife.

There are a number of people that are here to answer questions. I urge you to stop by. Thank you again for joining the meeting.

CHARLES M. KUPERUS: Dear Mr. Andrew:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Management of Resident Canada Geese.

Damage from Canada geese has had a
significant adverse effect on New Jersey's agricultural industry. Such damage has reduced crop yields and income, and may also contribute to the loss of New Jersey farms. Our farmers for many years have tried non-lethal methods, including harassment with dogs and pyrotechnics, fencing, balloons and repellents, as well as control of goose nesting - all at great expense. Despite this, the resident goose population continues to increase. It is evident that non-lethal methods alone are not effective enough to reduce the goose population.

The problems associated with Canada geese extend beyond the agricultural industry. Many of our communities are experiencing traffic hazards, degraded water quality, shoreline destabilization and increased erosion as a result of Canada geese. Clearly, a more pro-active management strategy is necessary to reduce the resident goose population and protect New Jersey's general public, agricultural industry and natural resources.

We have thoroughly reviewed the
alternative strategies in the draft and highly recommend that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service support and implement the general depredation order in Alternative G.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

(TIME NOTED: 8:45 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

I, ALBERT M. CITTON, a Court Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New York, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the statements hereinbefore set forth is a true record of the proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not related to any of the parties in this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 26th day of June 2002.

ALBERT M. CITTON

Notary Public of the State of New York