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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board / Regional Advisory Councils

FROM: Kent Hersey, Big Game Projects Coordinator

DATE: October 20, 2023

SUBJECT: R657-5, Taking Big Game rule amendments related to mandatory harvest reporting for general-season deer and elk hunters.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is recommending changes to R657-5 and R657-42 to maintain quality harvest data.

Below is a summary of the recommended changes to R657-5:

1. Mandatory harvest reporting for general-season deer and elk hunters
 - a. Require harvest reporting within 30 days after the season ends for hunters with permits for general-season buck deer and general-season spike bull or any bull elk. These hunts would include all general-season buck deer permits, Dedicated Hunter buck deer permits, youth buck deer permits, all spike bull elk permits, multi-season spike bull elk permits, all any bull elk permits, general-season archery elk permits and general-season youth elk permits.
 - b. Hunters who fail to submit their buck deer or bull elk big game harvest reports within the 30 days would be ineligible to apply in the big game and antlerless applications the following year.
 - c. To reinstate their hunt drawing eligibility, permit holders must pay a fee and file their harvest reports.

Below is a summary of the recommended changes to R657-42:

1. Update the Assessment of Late Fees (R657-42-9) section to include ineligibility to apply for big game and antlerless permits, or preference points, the following year for any person who fails to report their general-season antlerless big game, buck deer or bull elk hunt information within 30 days after the season ends, pursuant to R657-5.

We are recommending implementing these changes over a two-year period. Beginning in 2024, we recommend making harvest reporting mandatory for general-season deer and elk hunters, and will require them to complete a harvest report prior to being eligible to apply in the big game and antlerless applications the following year. As a transitional measure, we recommend waiving the late fee for general-season deer and elk hunters in 2024. However, beginning in 2025 we recommend requiring the completion of a harvest report — and the incurrence of a \$50 late fee for reports filed after the 30-day reporting period — to be eligible to apply in the big game and antlerless applications the following year.

For additional details, please see the redline version of proposed rule changes included in the RAC packet.