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# State of Utah

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board and Regional Advisory Councils

FROM: Dax Mangus, Big Game Coordinator

DATE: March 26, 2025

**SUBJECT: Utah Administrative Rule R657-5, Taking Big Game rule amendments related to mandatory harvest reporting dates/deadlines, antlerless hunting in Alton, youth hunting on units with restricted rifle hunts and importation of antlered skulls from states with chronic wasting disease.**

The DWR is recommending changes to Utah Administrative Rule R657-5 to allow the agency to do all of the following:

- Obtain timely harvest data from big game hunters
- Provide tools for managing deer numbers in and around Alton
- Maintain expanded general-season youth deer hunting opportunities for youth who obtain restricted rifle permits
- Facilitate responsible importation of antlered skulls from states with chronic wasting disease

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

1. Mandatory harvest reporting for big game hunters
  - a. Require harvest reporting within 30 days after their season ends or by Feb. 15, at the latest, for big game hunters.
  - b. This change will only affect the hunts with the latest seasons, and will give biologists more time to compile and analyze harvest information when making permit recommendations.
2. Antlerless hunting in and around Alton, Utah
  - a. Allow for the use of antlerless hunting to manage growing deer numbers in Alton.
  - b. There is a fence to exclude big game, but there are growing numbers of deer inside the fence, and hunter harvest is preferable to agency removal.



- c. The town of Alton, the Alton CWMU and hunters have all pledged to help with fence repair and maintenance to reduce the number of deer entering the area.
- 3. Youth hunting on general-season deer units with a “restricted rifle” hunt
  - a. Currently, youth who obtain an any-legal-weapon permit on a general-season deer unit may hunt all the general seasons on that unit
  - b. This proposed change would allow youth who obtain restricted rifle permits to hunt all applicable general seasons on their unit
  - c. Youth would still be required to follow any additional weapons restrictions on that unit. For example, restricted muzzleloader regulations would apply during the muzzleloader season.
- 4. Importation of big game skulls from states with chronic wasting disease
  - a. It is currently illegal to import deer, elk and moose skulls with brain material from a state that has tested positive for chronic wasting disease.
  - b. This proposed change would allow for importation of antlered skulls containing brain material.
  - c. The current regulation was considered burdensome by some hunters, compliance appeared to be low, and the change addresses those concerns while adding only minimal risk. (Most hunters who import skulls will take the skulls to a taxidermist — or clean them themselves — without adding brain material to deer habitats in Utah.)

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