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Reaction to the Cayuga Heights Deer Remediation Plan DEIS

I am an out-of-town resident who has spent time in Ithaca and had decided to move my family there.

I chose Ithaca to relocate to because I know many people there and had spent time there on and off over the years. It seemed to be an ideal community in which to raise our children.

I was drawn by the cultural richness of the area and a perceived peaceful and progressive attitude towards developing the town and solving its problems.

After two years of searching, I finally found a lovely home in Cayuga Heights with a large backyard, edged up against a woods, that fulfilled our dreams.

At the time, I was unaware of the deer-killing plans being pursued within Cayuga Heights.

As it grew closer to the time that I planned to move my family, I began following local politics. This is when I became aware of the controversy surrounding what was said to be a deer problem in Cayuga Heights and the plans to deal with the deer population within in the village.

As I understand it, elected officials have decided, without consulting the residents in any kind of survey or referendum, to put food in some secret places within the small community to lure the deer there and then have a hired team of sharpshooters to shoot them all. This was quite astounding.

Then I recently found out that this local government is now planning an even more violent method of exterminating the deer, by trapping the deer in groups in nets and then shooting them close range with some kind of bolts whilst the animals struggle ensnared in the nets. Is this possible?

This is not the kind of environment I want to bring my children up in. This is a negative environment condoning violence and denying the residents of their democratic rights. These are not values I sought when I chose Ithaca. These are not the examples I want my children to follow.

I'm also wondering about the safety of these programs within an area so small and with so many homes so close together. Is it possible to do this safely? I don't think so. Even if I was reassured by the government implementing this plan that it would be safe, it would not be possible for me to feel secure.

I therefore no longer feel the environment of Ithaca, and especially Cayuga Heights, is a suitable environment in which to raise my children. The cultural environment will be so severely compromised as to make it impossible for me to justify our complicity (as community members and taxpayers) in this extreme and violent culture.

I have heard that this final phase of the process is a study to assess the impact on the environment of the community that such a deer-killing plan will have. I hope that during this process, those reviewing the plans are able to see how drastically this program will alter the community in a negative and unalterable way, and I believe the cause of reason will prevail.

But if reason does not prevail, I will sadly soon be looking for a buyer for my lovely new home. It seems unlikely I will be able to recoup my investment, however, as I understand that real estate prices will decrease if this plan is put into effect, both because of the divisive and fearful atmosphere, and also because of the increase (5% per year over 10 years) in the already very high property taxes that will be levied to fund this deer-killing program.

Regardless of the financial losses I might incur, if the deer-killing plan is allowed to proceed, I will not bring my children into such an environment of violence and fear, and into an environment in which I cannot feel secure in letting them out to play.

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