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S1891/A1967

"New Bear Feeding Ban"



The four closed bins on the left are bear-resistant; the fifth, an open can is not.

Keeping bears away from unnatural food sources.

Unsecured garbage is the number one reason bears are attracted to neighborhoods, which leads to complaints. Residents utilizing simple "Bear Smart" techniques are key in avoiding human-bear encounters. "Bear Smart" limits bird feeders and secures all garbage receptacles. In bear country, it's essential to protect pets and animals who live outside.

Enforcement of the current black bear feeding law is poor. S1891/A1967 addresses enforcement issues and ambiguous language in the current law (NJSA 23:2A-14) enacted in 2002.

Senator Gordon Johnson (D-37) and Assemblyman Raj Mukherji (D-33) introduced a new bill to strengthen the current feeding ban law, which will reduce complaints and incidents with black bears.

S1891/A1967 helps create Bear Smart communities:

- Includes unintentional and intentional feeding or baiting of bear and deer. Whether it's intentional or not, feeding bears leads to food conditioning, which contributes to human-bear conflicts;
- Incentivizes enforcement by allowing the penalties to go to the municipality, not the state.
- Exempts wildlife rehabbers; agricultural or horticultural activities; birdfeeders between 4/1 – 11/30; shelters; approved TNR colonies; feeding companion animals; and federal, state, or local authorities that require feeding for scientific purpose.
- Reduces the cost of bear-resistant cans when trash haulers purchase bear-resistant cans in bulk, passing the savings on to customers.

What's the issue with feeding or baiting?

Baiting for bears or deer changes bears' behavior and leads to food conditioning and habituation to humans. Artificial feeding contributes to:

- potential conflicts and property damage;
- alterations in bear behavior and foraging habits;
- increased or sustained reproductive rate, physical size, distribution, and numbers of bears.

Moreover, baiting has significant negative impacts on a wide range of species and contributes to forest degeneration.

Baiting:

- concentrates bears, deer and other species, who then feed on natural vegetation in the area;
- attracts coyotes, raccoons, opossums, and rodents, thereby increasing predation on ground-nesting birds;
- contributes to the spread of wildlife disease and exotic and invasive plants;
- increases automobile-deer collisions;
- increases illegal activity;
- Increases reproduction in white-tailed deer.