

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 367 (Delegates Glass and Dwyer)
Environmental Matters

Hunting - Deer Firearms Season - January Days

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish by regulation a deer firearms season, for hunting antlerless deer, that includes at least three days in January.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: DNR establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals by regulation each year. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. There are three seasons to hunt deer in Maryland: deer bow hunting season; deer firearms season; and deer muzzle loader season.

Under current regulations, Maryland has two deer management regions. Region A includes Allegany and Garrett counties and the western portion of Washington County. Region B includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington (eastern portion), Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

The 2012-2013 deer firearms season takes place during the November through January period on dates that vary by region and by whether or not the deer has antlers. In Region A, generally, the deer firearms season is November 24 through December 8. In Region B, generally, the deer firearms season is November 24 through December 8 and January 4 through January 5 (antlerless deer only).

Background: Because white-tailed deer thrive in habitat that is composed of woods and openings and because hunter access in those areas is limited, suburban development has provided excellent deer habitat in the State, resulting in an escalation of deer populations in suburban areas. Higher populations of deer can lead to a greater number of negative interactions with suburban residents such as deer-vehicle collisions and vegetation damage.

According to DNR, regulated hunting remains the most cost-effective deer population control mechanism available throughout most of the State. However, DNR advises that the bill may adversely impact the deer herd in western Maryland. The deer herd in Region B is of sufficient size to sustain a liberal deer harvest; however, the deer herd in Region A may not be able to sustain three additional days of firearms hunting.

DNR estimates that the bill could result in the harvest of 1,000 additional deer in the State each year.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 5, 2013
mlm/lgc

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