

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 119

(Delegate Clark, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Calvert County – Hunting – Deer Management Permits

This bill allows a person who is hunting under a deer management permit in Calvert County to use a shotgun or breech loading center fired rifle approved by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to hunt deer throughout the year, including all deer hunting seasons, in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit. Additionally, a permittee who leases State land in Calvert County for crop cultivation may hunt deer on the leased land in the locations and under conditions set forth in the permit.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: This bill does not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal overall, but potential meaningful impact to farmers in Calvert County, as discussed below.

Analysis

Current Law:

Hunting Seasons – Generally

In general, 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 muzzleloader season. Deer hunting with

archery equipment extends from early September through the end of January. Firearms season is two weeks in November and December starting the Saturday after Thanksgiving. There is also a two-day firearms season in January. There are two muzzleloader seasons: one in mid-October and a second in late December.

Deer Management Permits

Maryland landowners or agricultural lessees who are experiencing severe economic loss from deer to commercially grown crops (including row crops, truck crops, pasture, nursery stock, orchards, and certain tree plantings) may be eligible to receive a deer management permit. Deer management permits allow the permittee or his/her agent to remove deer from the designated property outside any deer bag limits and/or the established deer hunting seasons, including on any Sunday throughout the year. These permits are issued by the Wildlife and Heritage Service within DNR; there is no permit fee.

A hunter with a deer management permit in Charles and St. Mary's counties may use a shotgun or a breech loading center fired rifle approved by DNR to hunt deer throughout the year in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit. Additionally, a deer management permit holder who leases State land in Charles and St. Mary's counties for crop cultivation may hunt deer on the leased land in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit.

Small Business Effect: Authorizing additional deer hunting and the use of approved rifles in Calvert County may have a potential meaningful economic impact on some farmers in that county by reducing crop damage. Most farms are small businesses. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service estimated that Maryland deer caused \$7.7 million in agricultural damage statewide. Based on past estimates of crop damage losses, DNR estimates that an individual deer causes \$33.05 in agricultural damage annually. To the extent that the bill reduces crop damage, farmers benefit.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Calvert County; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 29, 2018
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