

March 10, 2020

RE: HB 1129 – Turkey and Deer Hunting – Sundays – Firearm Season  
Position: OPPOSED

Dear Members of the House Committee on the Environmental and Transportation,

Please do not pass these bills! If you do pass them, you will infringe on the ability of a great portion of the non-hunting public – 98% in fact – to enjoy the outdoors during hunting season.

Did you know that there are 10.5 horses per square mile in MD, and that there are more horses in MD than any other state? Or that the horse industry has \$2.1 billion impact on Maryland's economy – earning huge tax revenue and 28,000 providing jobs? The recreation sector (trail riders) adds hundreds of millions of dollars to the state's economy. Horses need pastures which are one of the very best carbon sinks. Horses provide exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

However, many horse owners do not have horse trailers, and must rely on a network of private trails that traverse across their farms and open green spaces to ride. Other horse owners that do have trailers must travel to parks, because there are few public or private trails available close to them. However, whether on private land or in a park, Sunday is the only day we can be sure that there isn't a hunter just on the other side of the property's border. Sundays are the only safe day to enjoy our sport, since it is unnerving and dangerous to ride close to areas – be they your own property or not – where hunting is going on. Riding is a family activity. We often have children on ponies and teenagers riding who may not have the control and judgement that can be expected of an adult.

The hunting supporters will tell you they need Sunday because they work and have other obligations on the weekend. Well, we horseback riders and other outdoor enthusiasts also work, have family and other obligations too, and look forward to the weekend.

A Gonzales Maryland Survey shows that 59% of Republicans oppose Sunday hunting, with 72% Democrats in opposition, and 74% unaffiliated also oppose. Less than 2% of Marylanders hold hunting permits, so the rest of us would appreciate the consideration of a day free of hunting.

Please understand I am not opposed to hunting; I just want a safe day to enjoy the fields and woods with my friends, family and horses.

Sincerely,

Nancy Harmon  
Union Bridge, MD  
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