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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1304
Baltimore County- Hunting- Deer Management Permits

Environment & Transportation Committee
March 10, 2020

Chair Barve, Vice- Chair Stein and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on HB1304, Baltimore County- Hunting- Deer Management Permits. HB1304 adds Baltimore County to the list of counties that allow an individual to use a rifle to hunt deer throughout the year under a deer management permit. These permits are only granted to Maryland landowners or agricultural lessees who are experiencing severe economic loss from deer on commercially grown crops. Department of Natural Resources issues these permits as well as approving the rifle used.

A report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) MD Field Office shows that Maryland farmers suffered \$10 million in wildlife-related losses to agricultural, with 77% of those losses attributed to deer (NASS 2012). While there are other measures available for use to control crop damage resulting from deer, according to DNR, regulated hunting remains the most cost-effective deer population control mechanism available throughout most of the state. According to the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland, in their report entitled, Managing Deer Damage in Maryland, "there is some indication that aggressive hunting programs are resulting in lower losses of grain crops, which is a positive finding.

Deer management permits are an important tool for farmers – it gives them an option that can be utilized outside of the regular hunting season. While there are no actual statistics which show a clear correlation between deer management permits and a decrease in crop damage, statistics do reflect a decrease in the deer population. With fewer deer, one could surmise there would be less crop damage. The culling of deer from these properties will provide economic relief to Baltimore County farmers.

For these reasons, I request a favorable report.

With kindest regards,
Delegate Benjamin Brooks



(Near Marc Shawan Road, Butler Road and Mantua Mill) The caged in areas display what the crop in each plot should look like. The surrounding areas have been destroyed by deer.



(Bonita Ave and Worthington) Deer create significant damage on crops, even as the field is surrounded by an electric fence.



(Mantan Mill and Butler Road) In this photo, 27 deer can be seen grazing in a field. Close by was another cluster of 21 deer, meaning a farmer had nearly 50 deer in their field at once.