



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

March 31, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Vice Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 755 – Natural Resources – Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund – No Cost Licenses and Stamps

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports House Bill 755. This bill, as amended, would clarify that the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund can be used to fund the recreational fishing and hunting licenses for eligible veterans.

The department provides opportunities for individuals to donate to the Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund through its online licensing system. The Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund is administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust who then makes grants to eligible sponsors who provide recreational hunting and fishing opportunities for veterans. The goal of the department and the Chesapeake Bay Trust is to follow the science that being outdoors promotes healing in individuals recovering from physical and mental trauma or health issues. Since the bill took effect last July, the department has received 1,083 donations to the Fund totaling over \$7,000.

Upon review of the current statute, the department and the Chesapeake Bay Trust discovered that there is no explicit authorization for the Trust to make grants specifically for complementary hunting and fishing licenses. Providing complementary licenses for veterans was the original impetus for creating the Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund last year, so making the clarification in HB 755 is critical.

For the above reasons, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant HB 755 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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Director, Legislative and Constituent Service

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