

## **Hills Bridge Beagles**

### **Testimony SB 220 – Calvert County Sunday Hunting**

#### **Senate Committee on the Environment, Health, and Education**

#### **Position: OPPOSE**

Good afternoon Chairman Pinsky and Honorable Committee Members

My name is Margaret Addis Crane. I am a farm owner in Calvert County and the Joint Master of the Hills Bridge Beagles, a beagling foot pack that hunts in Calvert County and Charles County. The Hills Bridge Beagles are recognized foot pack by the National Beagle Club, the AKC parent club of Beagle breed.

I have been part of this pack since its inception – more than 40 years ago. The pack has between 60-80 followers that come out one or more times in any given season. Our followers range from the very young to the young at heart. Beagling gives people who might not otherwise have the opportunity, a chance to get out in the countryside to enjoy all the beauty Southern Maryland has to offer.

SB 220 only applies to private property. Quick fact – there is NO PUBLIC LAND in Calvert County that allows beagling. Public land in Calvert County is set aside for use by the deer hunters. So for example Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm which is the closest public area allows 4 deer hunters per day, but no beagling. That means no Beaglers can use the public land before deer season, during deer season, or after deer season. The resource is completely dedicated to the deer hunters. What does this mean for the Hills Bridge Beagles and its many followers? What it means is the Hills Bridge only beagle on private property in Calvert County.

As you are well aware, the effect of SB 220 will be expanded from Sunday deer hunting from seven (7) Sundays to twenty-one(21) Sundays each season. Under the current deer season, the Hills Bridge do everything they can not to impact the deer hunters and what this generally means is we go out on Sundays. If the season is expanded from 7 Sundays to 21 Sundays, then there will be no way the Hills Bridge Beagles can avoid the deer hunters because the Hills Bridge Beagles are limited to private lands in Calvert County. Unfortunately, my experience with deer hunters in Southern Maryland is they do not want to share the resource. As a result the Hills Bridge Beagles and its followers have been subjected to threats and harassment by deer hunters because they not want anybody to “disturb” the deer.

The HBB is not anti-gun or anti-hunting by any means. What the Hills Bridge Beagles are advocating for is a “*share the resource*” approach. Unfortunately, because my experience has been that deer hunters are not interested in sharing the resource and I can give countless examples where both public and private lands have been closed to all other hunting/chasing groups because of the deer hunters. I’d just ask that you consider a *sharing the resource approach* and oppose SB 220.

If you're interested in learning more about Beagling you can see the Hills Bridge Beagles on Outdoors Maryland by using the following link <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-394-23hx3m9f> . This video won an Emmy and was voted Maryland's Favorite dog video. I would note that the Hills Bridge Beagles no longer hunt on the farm shown in the Outdoors Maryland video which is Anne Arundel County. The farm was purchased by DNR, and the farm is now limited to deer hunting. The Beagles cannot use the farm even one time a year, which is a sad commentary on resource management.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before this committee.

Margaret Crane