

HB0683_DNR_SUP_E&T_2-22-23.pdf

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Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

February 22, 2023

BILL NUMBER: HB 683 - First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License – Alterations

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports HB 683 because it expands hunting opportunities for junior hunters in Maryland. Hunting remains a critical tool for wildlife management, particularly for abundant species like white-tailed deer. Hunter numbers have significantly declined across the country over the past 50 years. Most states, including Maryland, have invested in various recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) programs to stabilize hunter numbers and hopefully reverse the declining trend. Recruiting and retaining junior hunters is an important component in these programs, and SB 91 would assist with these efforts.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Apprentice hunting licenses are common throughout the United States. Maryland instituted its apprentice license in 2017. Since that time, thousands of new junior and adult hunters have taken advantage of the program. However, one complaint often heard is that juniors can only acquire an apprentice license for one hunting year. When that license expires, they must take a full hunter safety course and acquire a regular Maryland junior hunting license. Unfortunately, some juniors are not ready for a full hunting license or, due to timing of hunter education courses offered (which can be limited due to availability of volunteer instructors), are not able to complete the necessary requirements in time to obtain a full license during the next season. In these instances, the junior is forced to not hunt for an entire season, and there is a greater risk that the junior will lose interest in pursuing hunting in the future.

BILL EXPLANATION

HB 683 would enable junior hunters to obtain an apprentice hunting license in subsequent years (through age 16) so that they could continue hunting. Apprentice license holders are required to be directly supervised by a licensed hunter and must complete an online hunter safety course before obtaining the license. The bill requires that this safety course is taken each year that the junior hunter wants to acquire an apprentice license. The hunter would then need to obtain the traditional hunter education certification before purchasing a regular hunting license.

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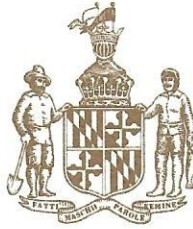
DeITMorgan HB683 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Todd Morgan

Position: FAV

TODD B. MORGAN
Legislative District 29C
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 22, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB683 Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License – Alterations

Honorable Chairman, Vice-Chair, and members of the ENT committee:

I present for you today HB683 Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License - Alterations

Maryland instituted the apprentice hunting license in 2017 to encourage people to try the sport of hunting before investing their money and time. An Apprentice Hunting License is available to first-time hunters who have never hunted before. This license requires:

- an online hunter safety course prior to purchasing the license
- the apprentice to hunt with a Maryland resident at least 18 years old, who possesses a valid Maryland Full Hunting License, and will provide direct supervision of the apprentice
- the apprentice and mentor hunter hunt in close proximity so that the mentor can take immediate control of the archery device or firearm

The biggest complaint received about the program is that junior hunters (16 and under) do not have enough time to experience hunting during the season (1-year cycle). This is often due to the program regulations and life activities. Additionally, some juniors are not ready for a full hunter license or are unable to complete the necessary requirements for a full license, particularly the safety courses, in time to obtain a full license during the next season.

Therefore, since we want to share this sport with youth in a safe and teachable way, expanding the program to enable junior hunters to obtain an apprentice hunting license more than one-year, is a practical way to ensure that. It allows juniors to enjoy the sport under the direct supervision of a licensed hunter, while gaining confidence and instruction to be a safe and responsible hunter.

In addition to the yearly license fee, the bill requires the junior hunter to re-take the safety course each year to acquire an apprentice license.

Thank you for your consideration and I ask for your favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd B. Morgan". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Todd B. Morgan
Delegate, Calvert/St. Mary's Counties (29C)

HOM Testimony on House Bill 683 re Apprentice Hunt

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

February 22, 2023

SUPPORT

House Bill 683 (Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License Alternations)

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite almost 100% of all wildlife management and research costs through their purchase of hunting licenses, stamps, and equipment. For the record: (1) hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists (link below); and (2) hunting in Maryland is a powerful economic engine as reported by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (link below).

https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/introduction_to_american_conservation_funding_.pdf
<https://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/Maryland-Factsheet.pdf>

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774
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William R. Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449
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Economics of Hunting in Maryland

Spending per day: \$2.2 million

Salaries and Wages: \$387 million

Federal Taxes: \$96 million

State & Local Taxes: \$84 million

Ripple Effect: \$1.25 billion

Source: USFWS

HONORABLE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND support House Bill 683 as introduced. Our rationale in supporting is consistent with and responsive to the written testimony provided by the lead sponsor, the Honorable Todd B. Morgan who states:

“The biggest complaint received about the program is that junior hunters (16 and under) do not have enough time to experience hunting during the season (1-year cycle). This is often due to the program regulations and life activities. Additionally, some juniors are not ready for a full hunter license or are unable to complete the necessary requirements for a full license, particular the safety courses, in time to obtain a full license during the next season. Therefore, since we want to share this sport with youth in a safe and teachable way, expanding the program to enable junior hunters to obtain an apprentice hunting license more than one-year, is a practical way to ensure that. It allows juniors to enjoy the sport under the direct supervision of a licensed hunter, while gaining confidence and instruction to be a safe and responsible hunter.”

For the above reasons and more, the HUNTERS OF MARYLAND respectfully request a favorable vote by the House Environment & Transportation Committee.

William R. Miles, Advocate