

# **Nagel Letter of Support**

Uploaded by: Libby Nagel

Position: FAV

February 13, 2024

Senator Brian Feldman  
Chairman  
Education, Energy and Environment  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**LETTER OF SUPPORT: SB367 Natural Resources – Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs – Authorization**

Chairman Feldman,

I am writing in support of SB367 for Antlerless deer hunting program. I am a minority farmer in Dorchester County, Md. I farm over 1800 hundred acres. 2023 saw extensive damage to my crops due to the hot spot of deer on my farm, a herd of up to 200 any given night. There is documentation and drone footage to support my statement. I have asked for emergency relief to no avail from the DNR or Dept of AG. I have had to resort to getting USFW to come in which I have had to pay for out of my pocket to help my situation. I personally lost over \$100,000.00 plus of income on just this one farm last year. I cannot survive taking losses like this every year. I have the right to farm and should be able to help protect my investment which ultimately puts food on my table. The deer are out of control in this county. Farmers need every tool in their box to help with this situation, allowing the Antlerless Program to continue is a way to encourage our youth to participate in the sport of hunting and encourages them to do so. This program also gives incentive to farmers to come out those last three days when they usually would not hunt. The program is growing each year. This is by no means the answer to the problem of explosion of deer but it allows the farming community another way to encourage hunters to help out with deer in our county.

Thank You for your consideration in this matter.

Regards

Libby Handley Nagel

**24 MGPA\_SB367 Doe Harvest Contests.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsay Thompson

Position: FAV



Maryland Grain Producers Association  
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www.marylandgrain.com

Date: February 13, 2024

Senate Bill 367 - Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization

Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

MGPA Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA supports Senate Bill 367 which would allow the Department of Natural Resources to allow for an existing antlerless deer hunting program in the month of January organized for the purpose of crop damage reduction.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service estimated in 2012 that farmers experience over \$10 million in crop damage annually with 75% of that being attributed to deer. MGPA would argue that with the growing deer population in certain areas of the state and increased input costs, that dollar figure is much higher now. Maryland's deer population was estimated to be just over 200,000 white-tailed deer and 10,000 sika deer in 2022. The density of deer to suitable habitat in Maryland is high and therefore causes conflict with not only farmers and their crops but also vehicles and homeowners. Responsible hunting and utilization of depredation permits are ways we can help control deer over-population.

Another program started by the agriculture community is the Lower Shore Doe Harvest Challenges. County Farm Bureaus and grain producers host a 3-day doe harvest challenge and each antlerless deer checked in enters the hunter into a drawing. If the hunter chooses to donate the deer, it is processed free of charge (paid for my farmers and agribusinesses) and donated to the Maryland Food Banks and local food pantries.

House Bill 863 was passed in 2020 which prohibited "killing contests" for fur-bearing animals. During the 2020 session, Maryland Grain Producers Association worked with the bill sponsor to clarify and were assured that this did not impact white-tailed deer and therefore would not prohibit the doe harvest contests.

However, over the last few years, the contests have been scrutinized by the Department of Natural Resources as a violation to Section 10-404 which prohibits the sale, exchange or barter of wild game and we are hoping for official clarification to allow them to continue. MGPA worked with the sponsor to move the language to the correct section of the code last year. We also worked with the opposition to the original bill last year and were able to bring them to a "no position" stance. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources did not take a position on this bill last year. The bill in this posture passed committee in both chambers last year, made it to a 3<sup>rd</sup> reader calendar for final passage and narrowly missed passage as time ran out on Sine Die.

MGPA respectfully requests your favorable report on Senate Bill 367.

**SB367\_RMC\_SupportTestimony-edits MD.pdf**

Uploaded by: Molli Cole

Position: FAV



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*Susan O'Neill, Chair*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

Testimony in Support of  
Senate Bill 367 - Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs – Authorization  
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
February 13, 2024

**The Rural Maryland Council supports Senate Bill 367 – Natural Resources – Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs – Authorization.** Senate Bill 367 would allow the Department of Natural Resources to conduct an antlerless deer hunting program through a raffle permit system during the month of January as a means of reducing crop damage.

The primary objective of the Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs is to tackle the issue of overpopulation of antlerless deer (female deer). Since many hunters tend to hunt only for bucks (male deer), the population of antlerless deer has grown tremendously. The proposed Programs is organized exclusively for hunting antlerless deer, and its sole purpose is to reduce the overpopulation. The hunters who take part in the program can either keep the deer or donate it to the local food bank.

The overpopulation of white-tailed deer can be quite a detriment to rural communities, specifically farms, due to crop damage. The state of Maryland has a high density of deer to suitable habitat, which often leads to conflicts with farmers, vehicle drivers, and homeowners. During the Maryland Deer Summit (hosted on May 11, 2023, at the Maryland Department of Agriculture), it was estimated by the Maryland Farm Bureau that deer cause about \$50.00 in damage per acre, which could add up to \$55 million statewide. Add in neighboring states, where farmers also have problems with deer, and the number would be higher still. To control the overpopulation of deer, it is important to practice responsible hunting and utilize depredation permits. By doing so, we can help reduce the impact of deer on crops, vehicles, and homes.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of Senate Bill 367.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

*“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”*

# **Support - SB0367 Natural Resources - Antlerless De**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**To:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE:** Support of SB0367 - Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs – Authorization

On behalf of the nearly 9,500 Farm Bureau families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in support of SB0367. The purpose of this bill is to authorize a person to receive a raffle ticket for each antlerless deer hunted by the person during a raffle program that (1) is held in January; (2) has as its objective the hunting of antlerless deer; and (3) was previously held at least once from January 1, 2020, through January 30, 2024, inclusive.

Currently Maryland farmers take the brunt of the state's overpopulated deer herd. According to USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Maryland farmers face up to 10 million dollars in estimated economic loss from wildlife damage. Of this economic loss, 77% of the damage is caused by deer. This crop damage causes great financial hardship on Maryland Farmers. Recreational hunting is not the solution to the industry's deer problem.

MDFB Policy: The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers... We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB0367**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

*Please Reach out to Tyler Hough at (443) 878-4045 with any questions*



**SB0367\_DNR\_INFO\_EEE\_2-13-24.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: INFO



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

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February 13, 2024

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 367 - First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization**

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION** =

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The Department's Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) is primarily responsible for a variety of different aspects of DNR's role in wildlife management. This includes monitoring wildlife populations, establishing hunting seasons, and protecting endangered species to name a few.

The proposed legislation is a specific exemption to the statute related to the sale, barter, or exchange of legally acquired deer.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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Current law prohibits the sale, barter or exchange of whole deer. Exceptions are included for mounted specimens. The existing contest referenced by the bill requires this legislation to avoid further ambiguity as to the legal status of the contest. The bill creates a limited exception for the particular contest occurring in four counties.

**BILL EXPLANATION**

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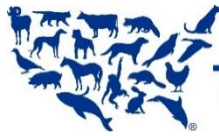
This bill authorizes a person to receive a raffle ticket for each antlerless deer hunted by the person during a raffle program that (1) is held in January; (2) has as its objective the hunting of antlerless deer; and (3) was previously held at least once from January 1, 2020, through January 30, 2024, inclusive.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

**SB367\_HSUS\_LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: INFO



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

February 13, 2024

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

SB 367

*Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization*

**LETTER OF INFORMATION**

On behalf of our Maryland supporters, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) would like to provide the committee with brief background and information on SB 367, which as currently drafted would authorize a person to receive a raffle ticket for each antlerless deer hunted by the person during a certain raffle program that has as its objective the hunting of antlerless deer. We do not take a position on this bill but want to ensure the committee understands the context of the larger conversation around deer management in Maryland.

The HSUS, along with wildlife management professionals and sportsmen's groups, stands in firm opposition to any legislation that contravenes longstanding conservation principles to create direct payments to hunters for taking what is, has been, and must always be a public resource that is managed in the public trust. Further, the commercialization of Maryland's wildlife runs counter to longstanding principles of responsible, fair chase hunting, as well as the historic rejection of market hunting by wildlife management agencies and professionals.

With regard to the regulated hunting of deer, The Wildlife Society says the following:

Killing contests differ from typical regulated hunting by the very nature of the organized public competition and prizes being given specifically for killing the largest, smallest, or most animals. "Big Buck" pools or organized record books differ from killing contests because the animals recognized in these competitions are harvested consistent with ordinary and generally accepted hunting practices and then introduced to the competition.<sup>1</sup>

As drafted, we do not take a position on this bill. However, it is critical that the committee understands we have deep reservations about this type of raffle program, and we would need to closely review any potential amendments to the bill to determine if they change our position on the legislation. We urge the committee to review all deer hunting legislation with a critical eye for avoiding commodification of this public resource and to look for opportunities to promote other solutions to human/wildlife conflict.

The HSUS urges the Maryland farming community to work with the Department of Natural Resources to expand the implementation of strategic exclusion, repellent techniques and scare tactics for reducing cervid crop damage and build on existing non-lethal damage management approaches. The use of fencing and/or electric fencing systems is cost effective during the growing season and for high value crops. These proven and sustainable damage prevention methods should be included as the cost of doing business irrespective of deer density.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wildlife Society Issue Statement: Wildlife Killing Contests <https://wildlife.org/tws-issue-statement-wildlife-killing-contests/>