

### **The proposed tax is unjust.**

Senate Minority Whip Justin Ready, said: 'In the time I've been here in Annapolis — in both the House and Senate — there is really no group of people that has been more targeted for punishment in the entire state ... than law-abiding gun owners'. This seems to fit the very definition of oppression: the malicious, unjust treatment or exercise of power over a group. 'Their ability to exercise their Second Amendment right is more difficult,' Ready said, "and now, this attempt to make it more expensive.'

Ready went on to say that "Marylanders who used legal channels to acquire their guns are saddled with the consequences of firearm violence, and called the bill "another slap at a community of law-abiding people." Senate President Bill Ferguson, seems to validate Ready's claim in that he 'pointed to two recent instances of gun violence in his South Baltimore district, including the July mass shooting in Brooklyn that left two dead and 28 injured'. Additionally, he admitted 'It is unlikely that a lot of the weapons that were used in that particular incident were legally purchased....'

So why is it right to oppress legal gun owners, and more specifically hunter with this 5% additional tax. Long guns are not the cause of this issue. It is unjust to tax hunters to fix an unrelated problem. This is just a money grab to fund shock trama.

Maryland only has 2-3 hunting accidents a year; however, Maryland sees 109,000 car accidents, with 40,000 injuries of which 2,900 are serious and about 550 fatalities a year. How about an additional tax on cars or fee on speeding tickets (PA has a 911 fee)? How many bicycle related accidents does the state have per year? Isn't this a more appropriate to increase the taxes on the sources of customers for trama center funding.

### **The proposed tax is inappropriate.**

The federal tax sighted in the proposed legislation, seemingly justifying it as "they do it too", is commonly known as the Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act. It is used to purchase and support wildlife and hunting. Hugg-Thomas wildlife management area in Sykesville was purchased with these funds. Nothing from this bill is used to support wildlife or hunting.

Chronic Wasting (aka mad cow) in a serious prion disease in deer. It has entered Fredrick and Carroll Counties, and is likely already in Howard County. "Some experts believe Parkinson's and Alzheimer's also may be caused by prions. Recent research shows that the barrier to a spillover into humans is less formidable than previously believed and that the prions causing the disease may be evolving to become more able to infect humans. Because spill over is likely going to be through consumption, testing of harvested animals is the best prevention." Where is the concern and eventual source of funding to provide testing and research to address this issue?

I can only assume that this legislative body assumes there is disposable income among many hunters. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many hunters I meet are poor and looking to put food on the table. Additionally, many hunters like myself donate deer to needy families, increased cost will likely decrease supply.

## **The Maryland Legislative branch should be partnering with hunters.**

Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service stated 'Deer hunting is essential for managing the state's deer population and assists with reducing agricultural damage and deer-vehicle collisions.' This is addition to their carrying lime disease, which about 1/3 of HOCO residents have contracted. Maryland's deer harvest was down 5% from last year, maybe because if the 50% increase to the cost of licenses.

A PennState study says in part:" Reducing the impact of deer on forest ecosystems is imperative to sustainable management of our forest resources. If deer are too numerous, mature forests will have no or very few desirable tree seedlings to replace trees that are harvested or die of natural causes. Research has shown that as many as 85% of forested sites in Pennsylvania that are harvested fail to regenerate a new forest of desirable tree species due to over-browsing by deer. Over-abundant deer populations also reduce the diversity of plants and other wildlife species found in the forest. Numerous species of birds which nest in the shrub layer or on the forest floor are reduced in abundance when deer populations rise beyond what the habitat can support."

### **Summary:**

This bill is bad for the environment. It will put our strained environmental resources at further risk.

It is bad for Maryland citizens. It only increases the effects of an overpopulation of deer on their property and their health.

It is a bad look for the legislative branch of the Maryland legislative branch. This bill along with the myriad of other bills suggested and passed recently only punish hunters. Counter to what it name implies, it does nothing to improve community safety. There is no cogent equitable argument in this bill that justifiably targets hunters.

It conflicts with the spirit of the Maryland Right to Fish & Hunt Act of 2021. It seems, along with the 50% increase in hunting licenses fees last year, the intent is to make hunting economically difficult. To do because of handgun violence, something you fail to control, seems misplaced and inappropriate.

It hurts Maryland businesses when hunters purchase out of state. An 11% savings make Delaware prices much look better.