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**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

February 4, 2025

**SENTE BILL 335**

Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

**SUPPORT**

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The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite 100% of all wildlife management/research costs through their purchase of hunting license fees/equipment. For the record, hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 86<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists.

Bill Miles, Advocate

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THE HONORABLE BRIAN J. FEDLMAN, CHAIR  
HONORABLE MEMBERS OF SEEE COMMITTEE

**T**he Hunters of Maryland, LLC commend Senator Bailey for his conservation-minded foresight in proposing to mitigate the unintended consequences of harvesting migratory Canada geese ("AP" Atlantic population) during Maryland's most liberal resident Canada goose hunting seasons. For the 2024/2025 season, Maryland – with approval from the US Fish & Wildlife Service – has authorized a 3-way split season for hunting resident Canada geese: (1) an early resident Canada goose season with a daily bag limit of 8 birds in both the Eastern Zone (September 2-14) and Western Zone (September 2-25); (2) a late resident Canada goose season with a daily bag limit of 5 birds statewide from November 23-29; and (3) a late resident Canada goose season with a daily bag limit of 5 birds statewide from December 16-March 10. Comparatively speaking, the 2024/2025 season for hunting migratory AP geese – a 30 day, 1 bird daily bag limit – is 2-fold: (1) December 20-January 4; and (2) January 15-February 1.

The breeding pair and total population estimates in 2024 on the Ungava Peninsula was 88,890 pairs – accordingly – which was significantly lower than the estimated number of breeding pairs on the Ungava Peninsula in 2023 of 115,328 pairs. The total population estimate in 2024 of 606,672 individuals was less than the 2023 estimate of 611,590 individuals. *Still awaiting future population estimates...Spring/Summer 2025.*

[https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/AP\\_Survey\\_report\\_2024\\_finalv2.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/AP_Survey_report_2024_finalv2.pdf)

It's perfectly understandable to hunt resident geese in September – migratory geese don't arrive until late November – with an 8-bird daily bag limit. It's not perfectly understandable to hunt resident geese from December 16, 2024 through March 10, 2025, with a daily bag limit of 5 birds. **Why risk harvesting 5 resident geese each day during a 95-day season when there is a chance some of those resident birds could be AP birds? WE MUST BE CAUTIONARY.**

The last thing we want in Maryland is to see what happened in 1995, resulting in a 6-year moratorium on AP Canada goose hunting. Breeding surveys then of key AP nesting areas in northern Quebec documented a more precipitous decline in AP numbers from 118,000 nesting pairs recorded in 1988 to 90,000 in 1993, 40,000 in 1994, and 29,000 pairs in 1995. This dramatic change in numbers of AP geese, greater than 75 percent in less than a decade, prompted State, Federal, and Provincial wildlife agencies in 1995 to suspend the sport hunting season of AP geese in the United States and in the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The resultant 6-year closure, caused by a precipitous 75 percent drop in this flyway's migratory goose population, figured to cost the region – Maryland's Eastern Shore -- anywhere from \$20 to \$40 million each year.