

**SenatorBailey\_FAV\_SB335.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY  
*Legislative District 29*  
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
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February 4, 2025

**Senate Bill 335 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 335, which would require the bag limit for all Canada geese to be uniform across the State during the migratory Atlantic population Canada goose hunting season.

There are currently two different goose hunting zones in Maryland: one for Atlantic Population Geese who migrate and leave the contiguous 48 states, and one for resident population geese who live in the contiguous 48 states all year, including the migrant geese we have in Maryland that migrate to upstate New York but do not enter Canada. The State is divided into these zones based on the type of geese that are generally found in that area, the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone and the Resident Population Hunt Zone. The season for hunting resident population geese is managed by the State and is over 70 hunting days with a daily limit of five birds. The season for hunting Atlantic Population Geese is managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and is considerably more restricted, as the season is 30 hunting days with a daily limit of two birds.

Atlantic Population geese are currently being shot at an alarming rate in the Resident areas during the AP season. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that the entire State abides by these lower bag limits during the Atlantic Population season. This is necessary because the geese that migrate to Maryland do not necessarily abide by the lines that we have drawn dividing the State into these two hunting zones. It is common for the migratory geese to be chased from the Atlantic Population Zone into the resident zone, thus removing these important protections for these geese.

At this time, there is consideration to reduce the daily limit for AP geese during the next hunting season. This bill simply does our part in protecting a resource that was under a moratorium in this State and I fear a moratorium in the future. The science is clear with the 90 day, 3 bird limit in the 1970s and 1980s that we simply killed too many birds.

Senate Bill 335 will only affect the bag limits in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone during the 30-day Atlantic Population season. As soon as the Atlantic Population season is over, hunters in the resident hunting zone will be able to return to the higher limit. By protecting these migratory geese from overharvest, we will ensure that a moratorium will not be issued on hunting geese in Maryland, as the Atlantic Population geese are what sets the standard for the whole population. The bill still allows a late resident season, and USDA permits for nuisance resident geese are not affected.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 335. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey

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Uploaded by: Jared Thompson

Position: FAV

February 4, 2025

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Senate Bill 335 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

I am writing in favor of Senate Bill 335 which would require that the bag limit for all Canada Geese in the State conform to the migratory Canada Goose limit during the migratory waterfowl season, including the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population zones.

Currently, even during the migratory waterfowl season when the migratory limit is 2 geese, the limit is 6 in the Atlantic Flyway Resident zones. In some cases, the only thing separating the migratory zone from the resident zone is a highway. There is nothing to prevent the migratory Canada Geese from flying into the resident zone where the limit is 6.

While DNR claims that the over winter Canada Goose population in Maryland in 2024 was higher than the five-year average, in 2023 the over winter population was just 320,000 which is the second lowest count since the goose hunting moratorium. The moratorium was instituted in 1995 and US Fish and Wildlife stated they were trying to rebuild the breeding-pair population to 300,000. In 2023, the actual observed breeding pair population according to US Fish and Wildlife was 115,328. The integrated population model used to set the bag limits in 2023 was found to be a 57% overestimate from the 2023 observed aerial breeding pair survey.

Managing the migratory waterfowl population in Maryland is a complex and moving target. Allowing for triple the migratory bag limit in the resident zones, even during the migratory waterfowl season, will not contribute to migratory Canada Goose survivability and population rebound. Maintaining the resident limit during the resident only season will address concerns of crop and property damage by land owners and managers in that region.

I urge your favorable report on Senate Bill 335

Jared Thompson  
Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Association  
President

# **MDFB - Support SB335 Natural Resources - Canada Ge**

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)

January 31, 2025

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

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

**RE:** **Support of SB0335 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of SB0335 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits. The purpose of this bill is to require during the migratory Canada goose (Atlantic population) hunting season, the bag limit for all Canada geese in the State, is to conform to the bag limit for the Atlantic population of Canada geese adopted annually by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Migratory Canada geese, particularly those in the Atlantic Population, pose significant challenges to Maryland's agricultural industry. Overpopulation of these birds results in substantial crop damage, leading to financial losses for farmers and food supply disruptions. By allowing Maryland's bag limits to conform to federal guidelines, Senate Bill 335 provides a scientifically sound approach to managing goose populations in a way that mitigates the negative effects on our farmlands while ensuring sustainable hunting practices.

Additionally, maintaining a consistent regulatory framework with federal agencies simplifies compliance for farmers, hunters, and conservationists alike. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bases its regulations on extensive research and population assessments, ensuring that bag limits are adjusted appropriately to protect both the species and agricultural interests.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB0335**

Sincerely,

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

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions

# **HOM Testimony Supporting SB 355 .pdf**

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



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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.



**SB0335\_DNR\_LOI\_EEE\_2-4-25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: INFO



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

February 4, 2025

BILL NUMBER: **Senate Bill 335**

SHORT TITLE: **Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits**

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

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION**

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The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information regarding Senate Bill 335 related to Canada Geese hunting bag limits.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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Maryland Canada goose hunting is regulated by the federal government's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There are two Canada goose hunting seasons in Maryland; one that targets resident geese and another for the migratory Atlantic Population (AP) geese that nest in the subarctic Ungava Peninsula region of Canada and migrate to Maryland for the winter.

Population trends for resident geese and migratory geese are vastly different, with resident geese considered over-populated, while migratory AP goose numbers are more limited and managed much more conservatively. Fortunately, numerous years of scientific studies involving banding of individual geese, as well as large-scale radio-telemetry studies have provided the Department with the information needed to delineate the wintering grounds of migratory geese. As a result, the Department, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and all other Atlantic Flyway states, have established resident and migratory hunt zones to focus appropriate amounts of hunting pressure on the two Canada Goose populations.

The Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone, as designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, largely avoids the migratory AP goose wintering grounds. The Canada goose population in this zone is comprised primarily of locally produced resident geese, and only 3-4% of the geese harvested within this zone are migratory AP Canada geese. The designated Atlantic Population Hunt Zone encompasses the known wintering grounds for migratory AP Canada geese in Maryland.

Both season length and bag limits are different for the resident and migratory goose hunt zones. Currently, in the Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone, hunters have approximately 80 days to hunt geese and can harvest 5 geese per day. In the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone, hunters have approximately 30 days to hunt and will be able to harvest 1 goose per day starting with the 2025-2026 season. Senate Bill 335, if adopted, will require that approximately 30 of the 80 hunt days in the resident Canada Goose Zone

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
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change from a 5 geese daily bag limit to a 1 goose daily bag limit in 2025-2026. The daily bag limit could change four times during the course of the 80-day season, potentially causing confusion for hunters.

The primary purpose of the Resident Canada Goose Zone is to allow liberal hunting regulations to help address the agricultural, ecological and nuisance problems caused by resident geese. Resident geese are a common problem in many states within the Atlantic Flyway, and in Maryland they can cause an estimated \$500,000 in damage annually. The Department routinely responds to complaints from farmers, golf courses, and HOA's regarding over-abundant resident geese, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Wildlife Services commonly issues depredation permits to assist with Canada goose population management and site-specific damage and nuisance issues.

Based on a hunter mail survey conducted annually by the Department, from 2013-2022 an average of 1,200 hunters hunted resident geese in the Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone. They spent on average 4,757 days hunting in this zone and harvested 5,145 geese annually. It is expected that these numbers would decline if the bag limit is reduced in this zone during the Atlantic Population migratory goose season.

### **BILL EXPLANATION**

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SB 335 would require the Department to apply the Canada goose daily bag limit established for the Atlantic Population Goose Hunt Zone to all Canada goose hunting zones when the migratory AP Canada goose season is open. The daily bag limit would follow the current Atlantic Population Hunt Zone bag limit as annually established by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.