

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 278

(Chairman, Anne Arundel County Senators)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

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Anne Arundel County - Deer Hunting on Private Lands - Sundays

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This bill repeals the prohibition regarding deer hunting on private land in Anne Arundel County on Sundays.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Enforcement could be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues would not be materially affected.

**Local Effect:** The bill would not materially affect Anne Arundel County finances or operations.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals by regulation each year. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. Except for specified persons and under specified conditions, hunting game birds or mammals on Sundays is prohibited. Chapter 170 of 2003 authorized DNR to allow for deer hunting on private property on two Sundays (the first Sunday of the bow hunting season in November, and the first Sunday of the deer firearms season). The Sunday hunting provisions do not apply in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties or

in Baltimore City. There are three seasons to hunt deer in Maryland: (1) deer bow hunting season; (2) deer firearms season; and (3) deer muzzle loader season.

**Background:** Because white-tailed deer thrive in habitat that is composed of woods and openings, and because hunter access in those areas is limited, recent suburban development has provided excellent deer habitat in the State, resulting in a significant increase in the deer population. The high population of deer has resulted in a marked increase in the number of human-deer conflicts, including deer-vehicle collisions, damage to crops and vegetation, and incidents of lyme disease. In addition, numerous research studies have documented negative ecological impacts on native vegetation and other species.

According to DNR, regulated hunting continues to be the most effective and cost-efficient strategy to manage abundant wildlife populations, especially deer. DNR advises that because it has exhausted the other options available, Sunday deer hunting is the last remaining and most important tool that can be employed to increase hunter participation and deer harvest.

According to DNR, the Sunday bow kill typically represents about 2 to 3% of the total bow kill for those counties where Sunday hunting is permitted; the Sunday firearms kill typically represents about 13% of the two-week firearms kill for those counties where Sunday hunting is permitted. DNR estimates that the bill could result in the harvest of an additional 150 to 200 deer.

**Small Business Effect:** By providing for Sunday deer hunting in Anne Arundel County, the bill could result in an increase in revenues for small businesses. A 2001 report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that Maryland deer hunting resulted in about \$80 million in retail sales in the State, or \$979 per deer harvested. The projected impact on the State's economy totaled \$156 million, or \$1,862 per deer harvested. In addition to businesses affected by hunting, the bill could also affect several other types of businesses. Most farms are small businesses. A 2001 survey by the Maryland Department of Agriculture found that farmers suffered crop losses of \$13.6 million due to deer (or about \$57 for each deer in the population). To the extent that the bill reduces crop damage, farmers would benefit. The bill could also affect vehicle owners and businesses involved in the repair of vehicles. In 2001, approximately 4,200 deer were reportedly killed by vehicles (or about one deer killed for every 57 deer in the population). Each deer-vehicle collision results in an average of \$2,000 in collision damage. Property owners and businesses could also be affected to the extent that the bill reduces damage to ornamental shrubs and gardens.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 128 of 2005, an identical bill, passed the House with amendments. The bill was reported favorably from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee but was recommitted to the committee, and no further action was taken.

**Cross File:** HB 205 (Delegates Costa and Love) – Environmental Matters.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, Anne Arundel County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 27, 2006  
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