

Department of Legislative Services  
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 289

(Senator Edwards)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

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**Allegany County and Garrett County - Turkey Hunting - Sundays**

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This bill authorizes turkey hunting in Allegany and Garrett counties on the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, except if it is Easter Sunday.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** This bill is not expected to materially affect local operations or finances.

**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. Currently, wild turkey hunting takes place during the fall – in only Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties and with a bag limit of one turkey – and the spring. During the 2009-2010 hunting season, turkey hunting is authorized October 31 through November 7, April 19 through May 24, and April 17 (junior hunting only).

With specified exceptions, hunting game birds or mammals on Sundays is generally prohibited. Among the exceptions, in Dorchester, Frederick, St. Mary's, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties, a person may hunt deer on private property with a bow and arrow during open season on the last three Sundays in October and the second Sunday in November.

**Background:** Less than 50 years ago, only a few hundred turkeys remained in Maryland. However, due in part to establishing hunting restrictions and implementing restoration efforts, approximately 30,000 wild turkeys are currently in the State. During the fall 2008 hunting season, a total of 215 wild turkeys were reported harvested, a 5% increase over the 2007 season harvest of 205 wild turkeys. Hunters reported taking 2,833 wild turkeys during the spring 2008 season, a 15% increase from the 2007 season harvest of 2,455 turkeys.

Turkey hunting contributes significantly to the State's economy with over 11,000 hunters spending about 60,000 days in the field. Based on the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation, turkey hunters contributed over \$5.0 million to the State's economy in the form of food, lodging, equipment, and transportation while hunting in Maryland.

**Small Business Effect:** By providing for additional Sunday turkey hunting in Allegany and Garrett counties, the bill may result in an increase in revenues for small hunting-related businesses. DNR advises that extrapolating from the statewide economic effect suggests that turkey hunting contributed \$1.2 million to the economies of Allegany and Garrett counties in 2006.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** Although HB 245 (Allegany County Delegation - Environmental Matters) is designated as a cross file, it is different.

**Information Source(s):** Allegany and Garrett counties, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2010  
mpc/lgc

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