

Stoney Creek Fishing & Hunting Club

9090 Ft. Smallwood Rd.

Pasadena, MD 21122

January 23, 2020

SB 86: Natural Resources – Fishing and Hunting Rights **Testimony by Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club** **Support**

The Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club, which has some 300 members and has been in existence for over 70 years, supports SB 86. We support the Bill because, if enacted, it will help preserve the time honored sports of fishing and hunting that many Marylanders have participated in and enjoyed since the founding of the Maryland colony in 1632.

While fishing and hunting for the early settlers of Maryland was a necessity for survival, both endeavors have evolved into long-enduring, healthful, enjoyable activities. They are an integral part of Maryland's culture, having been passed down from generation to generation. Fishing and hunting have become a tradition to many individuals and their families. It is hard to find a more enjoyable and gratifying moment than to watch a youngster land his or her first fish, or bring down a game bird in flight for the first time. The joy and excitement of the moment are long remembered by both individual and the adults with them.

But the benefits of fishing and hunting are not just pleasure. They are learning and educational experiences. When fishing, one soon learns to "read" stream beds and know where the fish are likely to be, or if on the Bay, learn the importance of tides and what causes them, an appreciation of the impact of unexpected changes in the weather, recognizing the effects of pollution and understanding many aspects of boater safety.

As to hunting, the individual learns how to safely handle firearms, hunt as a team, identify different species of wildlife and their habits, and understand natural environments and wildlife habit. In addition, they gain an appreciation of the importance of physical fitness, the need to conserve our forests and wildlife, the importance of survival skills, and perhaps above all, patience. The State of Maryland has an excellent Hunter Safety program that for years has laid the ground work for the development of these skills, with particular emphasis on wildlife conservation and wildlife "fair chase" practices. The Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club has had the pleasure of supporting this program many years.

The fishing and hunting sports play a major role in fishery and wildlife conservation efforts. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (National Fishing License Data and National Hunting License Data, CY 2019), some 369,250 resident fishing licenses, tags, etc, were issued in Maryland in 2019 generating \$6.8 million in State revenue. There were another 90,418 licenses, etc. issued to non-residents which brought in revenues of \$2.1 million. Many of these funds are used to match federal grants.

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For hunting, there were 281,145 licenses, etc. issued in Maryland during 2019 that brought in over \$3.4 million. Non-resident licenses totaled 63, 594 with an additional \$3.1 million in State revenues.

The Federal Government provides funding to Maryland and other states through the Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson) of 1937, and the Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson) of 1950. Maryland's share of grants from these funds for FY 2019 were \$6.5 million and \$3.7 million, respectively. These funds are generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment, firearms and ammunition, and equipment related to these sports. The funds have played a major role in fishery and game conservation efforts by the State.

It is significant that a number of other states have recognized the importance of protecting the right of their citizens to fish and hunt. A total of 22 states have constitutional provisions protecting these rights. Vermont was the first state to include these rights when it drafted its constitution in 1777. Since 1996 the other 21 states have amended their constitutions to protect these rights.

https://ballotpedia.org/Right_to_hunt_fish_constitutional_amendments).

We believe the individual and collective rights of Maryland citizens to fish and hunt must be preserved for future generations. Accordingly, we strongly support SB 86.

We urge that SB 86 receive a favorable report.



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