



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Charles Glass, Deputy Secretary

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 173 – Natural Resources – Sunday Hunting

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports House Bill 173 and respectfully requests a favorable committee report.

This bill would clarify and standardize Sunday hunting opportunities during legal seasons on private and certain public properties in Maryland. The bill uses existing statutory authority and streamlines the extensive subtitle into a more readable and comprehensive section. The bill does not change or otherwise expand or restrict the existing requirements for Sunday hunting. However, it does codify long-standing departmental policy prohibiting Sunday hunting on any land in the Maryland State Park system.

Because of piecemeal, jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction authorization over the past decade, the Sunday hunting statute reads as an unclear hodge-podge of exceptions, prohibitions, and carve-outs. Creating a standardized framework for Sunday hunting will not only aid in its enforcement, but assist the department in clearly communicating the law to its customers, thereby reducing the potential for user conflict and increasing hunting opportunities. A clear statutory framework will also enable policymakers to maintain a consistent policy when deliberating the multiple Sunday hunting bills before them each year, which will prevent further clutter in the law.

The drafting of this legislation was a collaborative effort between the department's attorneys and Committee staff, and a significant amount of effort went into making sure nothing in existing statute is left out or new authority granted. The department respectfully urges the Committee to reject any amendments other than those of technical nature, of which the department is offering two.

For the above reasons, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources respectfully requests the Committee to grant House Bill 173 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

Contact: James W. McKitrick, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
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