



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

February 26, 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 Information – House Bill 863 – Natural Resources – Organized Hunting Contests – Restrictions***

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information regarding House Bill 863. This bill would prohibit a person from sponsoring, conducting, or participating in an organized contest that involving the hunting or killing of a fur-bearing or unprotected mammal for prizes or monetary rewards.

Of the fur-bearing mammals defined in statute, only coyote, fox, raccoon, opossum, and skunk may be hunted. Unprotected mammals include woodchuck and nutria. The Department does not regulate ‘contests’ per se but any event that involves certain furbearing species and is a dog-training or field-trial activity is subject to permitting requirements from the Department. The Department requires all events to comply with the seasons, bag limits and other laws and regulations but has no role in determining if prizes or awards are offered in these events. Also, because the act of pursuing wildlife is included in the definition of hunting, an organized no-kill fox and raccoon hunt may also be affected by this bill.

Finally, coyote, fox and raccoon are rabies-vector species (RVS) since there is a high incidence of rabies in these species. The Department of Health and the Department of Natural Resources prohibit the rehabilitation of adult RVS. House Bill 863 would require the Department to transport injured RVS to licensed wildlife rehabilitators or veterinarians for treatment contrary to current policy and regulations.

Thank you for allowing the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to provide this information regarding House Bill 863.

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