

Summary of oral testimony
Animal Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association
Kimberly Fullerton

February 25, 2020

Re: HB 863: Natural Resources – Organized Hunting Contests – Restrictions
Environment and Transportation

My name is Kimberly Fullerton. I am an animal law attorney and serve Chair of the Animal Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association. The section is in **favor** of HB 863. Joining me is our Legislative Liaison, Maureen Quinn.

I also serve as Chair of the Wildlife Subcommittee of the American Bar Association, and I live on a farm in Charles County, close to where these killing contests take place. It's not hard to find them.

A killing contest is a social event and people play on teams because it is a game to them. There is no regulation, no accountability, no scientific method. This is not conservation, and it an embarrassment to our state.

In Charles County, the killing of red foxes is permitted year-round, and without limit. Yet the foxhunter associations do not actually hunt fox - they lay a scent trail, grab a horse, and still have a wonderful time. Measures are in place in case a hound accidentally catches a wayward fox. The hound is retired to guard against future accident which might affect a very fragile ecosystem.

If you engage in ecological management, you cannot indiscriminately kill animals. History has shown us how destructive this that practice is to our ecosystem. Maryland DNR even states in its furbearer management program that “all native species are integral and irreplaceable components of functional ecosystems.”

This bill is of critical importance because it follows a UN report which warns nature is in a state of unprecedented decline, with one million species at risk of extinction. Coupled with the bipartisan legislation sweeping America and the disturbing HSUS report filmed in my hometown, killing contests is an issue that we must address.

Please take this testimony into consideration, as well as the MSBA Animal Law Section's support, and vote in favor of HB 863.