

March 10, 2020

Position taken by Gail Clark-Brodt regarding Sunday Hunting.

I have been a member of the Tuckahoe Equestrian Center (TEC) on Eastern Shore since its inception in 1992: (20 year board member, 7 years as Treasurer, 11 years as Editor of newsletter, and serving 2 years as current Secretary) **TEC currently has over 300 members.**

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HB 1129 Expansion of Sunday deer hunting **with a firearm**, on private **and public property.**

VOTE NO to this bill.

Sundays are the one day during the hunting season that riders, hikers and birders can comfortably and safely enjoy their sports on public lands, without concern either for the noises and surprises caused by shooting close by, or the fear of an errant shot hitting either a person or a horse. I have no problem with hunters pursuing their sport. It is needed to keep certain wildlife populations under control for their health and sustainability in sometimes limited habitats. I speak specifically for horseback riders who do not want to prohibit hunters from what they do, but we do not want them to prohibit us from doing what we do.

These bills remove the balance between hunters and riders. By eliminating all days during the prime winter riding months of the year when riders can enjoy their sport, you are giving the message that we are not considered important enough to being given one day per week during 3 ½ months of the year. You are also giving the same message to hikers, campers, bicyclists, birders and families out for walks.

As riders, if not permitted non-hunting days in which to ride, we will, for our own safety, create noise (with saddle bells, by riding in large groups, etc.) to alert hunters to our locations. This, of course, will not endear us to the hunters.

Please remember that **100,000 horses** in Maryland (more per square mile than any other state) contribute in an enormous way to the financial health of equine-related businesses located in the state. Over **\$1 billion annually is spent by participants in the equine industry!** And for those who also want a cleaner Chesapeake Bay, pasture land owned by those who keep horses is an important filter which helps prevent run-off from the land into bay waters.

A vote **for** these bills, is a vote that reduces the riders, then the number of horses, then a loss of state revenue, and then the loss of pasture land. It's an evitable domino effect. **Vote NO.**