



HUNTERS OF MARYLAND

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HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 18, 2020

SENTE BILL 86

Natural Resources – Fishing and Hunting Rights

SUPPORT

THE HONORABLE KUMAR P. BARVE, Chair

HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Hunters of Maryland commend Senator Bryan Simonaire for his introduction of Senate Bill 86 which sets forth the importance of hunting/fishing to our cultural/social heritage. And we support this proposal and urge the House Environment & Transportation Committee to concur with a favorable vote. It is indeed visionary in scope and would be most appreciated by sportsmen and sportswomen of Maryland.

From a hunting perspective, few truly understand what it's like being afield. It's not the harvesting per se, but the experience of being one with nature generally in the harshest of weather conditions. Hunters, not taxpayers, underwrite virtually 100% of the State's entire cost for managing wildlife consistent with the American System of Conservation Funding, aka "user fee based" via hunting license/stamp sales. Notably as well, it's been over 30 years since Maryland has approved a regular hunting license fee increase. Moreover, one need only view legislation over the last decade plus to see that it's the hunters of Maryland who have advanced legislation to punish poachers, strengthen conservation law enforcement efforts and pursue alternative public funding support.

<http://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/ASCF%20one%20page.pdf>

*Maryland's 88,000
hunters spend an
average of \$3,000 per
year – generating about
\$400 million in economic
activity – much of which
is spent local in-State.*

Looking forward, it is not unrealistic to imagine hunting in Maryland coming to an end one day. Youth of today – evidenced by declining license sales – simply are not that interested. Competing interests – indicative of a more urban/suburban environment than a rural one – coupled with aging grandfathers speaks to this real possibility. Maybe not in our lifetimes; but, who knows in subsequent generations?

Enactment of Senator Simonaire's legislation by the 2020 General Assembly will send a message to the citizenry, et al, that hunting and fishing in Maryland are noble pursuits worthy of recognition and support in ways not yet imagined, but known to all as an everlasting legacy.

Bill Miles
Advocate, Hunters of Maryland