

**KATIE FRY HESTER**  
*Legislative District 9*  
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology  
and Biotechnology



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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB769- Income Tax Credit for Venison Donation - Alterations,  
Extension, and Testing for Chronic Wasting Disease**

February 24, 2021

Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 769. Over the past year our communities have seen an unprecedented need for food assistance. Enrollment in the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at the end of last year was up 14 percent from the same time in 2019, with nearly 43 million Americans receiving benefits. Even in normal times, the Maryland Food Bank estimates that one in nine Marylanders, including one in seven children in Maryland, suffer from food security. Over the past year, we have all seen food bank lines wrapped around street corners, and have had constituents reach out not knowing where they would find their next meal. I want to thank this committee for all the hard work you've already done in passing the RELIEF Act with amendments to address food insecurity, but this problem persists and no options can be left off the table.

This simple bill seeks to further address the issue of food insecurity, and better engage Marylanders in providing aid to their neighbors and community members. Currently, the State of Maryland operates this program, providing tax credits to Marylanders for the donation of processed venison to a non-profit venison donation program. It is a small program, facilitating venison donations every year by providing tax credits of up to \$50 to cover processing expenses, capped at \$200 annually.

SB769 makes a handful of modest alterations to this existing program. First, this bill increases the tax credit for each donation from \$50 to \$75 to cover the cost of processing venison prior to donation. With the cost of processing rising in recent years, this increase in the allowable tax credit will make sure the program continues to achieve its intended goal. Additionally, we propose an increase in the annual cap of income tax credits from \$200 to \$600 through the program, to encourage more donations in this time of need, as well as an extension of the program's sunset from 2023 to 2027. Finally, the bill directs the Department of Natural Resources to study the testing of deer brought to processors for chronic wasting disease and report their findings to the General Assembly by December 31, 2021. This provision is

intended to provide additional oversight and ensure the quality of donations being made through this program.

This is a modest bill to make an existing program more effective and meet a need for food security that we have all seen spike over the past year. These alterations will provide hunters across the State with more incentive to provide donations to their local non-profits through this program - and according to the fiscal note, at minimal impact to State revenues. For those reasons, **I respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 769.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Carroll and Howard Counties