



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 23, 2021

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 7 – *Venison Donation Expenses – Income Tax Credit and Grant Program* – Support

House Bill 7 bill alters the existing venison donation income tax credit by extending eligibility to certain donations made to the Montgomery County Deer Donation Program. The bill also establishes, beginning in fiscal 2023, a Venison Donation Grant Program to be administered by the Department of Natural Resources.

Montgomery County's Deer Donation program is administered by the County's Office of Agriculture (OAG). This program encourages farmers and hunters to harvest more deer in a responsible manner by providing local, minimum-hassle deer collection sites. It is administered in partnership with William F. Willard Farm, LLC and KS Kuts to coordinate the collection, processing, and donation of venison to local area food banks. Hunters can drop off field dressed deer at two locations – one in Poolesville and the second in Damascus at the KS Kuts deer processing facility where the deer meat is cut, wrapped, and made available to local food banks for people in need. The County's Office of Agriculture administers the annual contract which is used to pay for expenses associated with the cold boxes and processing of deer meat, including the staff time and transportation costs etc.

Since 2004, about 2,500 deer have been collected through the program resulting in the donation of 88,000 pounds of venison to local food banks. According to Farmers & Hunters Feeding the Hungry, one donated deer can feed up to 200 people. House Bill 7 may encourage more hunters to participate in the County's Deer Donation Program. For the aforementioned reasons, I support House Bill 7 and respectfully request a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee