

**HB 7 - MoCo - CE (Senate)(GA 21).pdf**

Uploaded by: Elrich, Marc

Position: FAV



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

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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

# **Support HB 7 - Venison Donation Expenses – Income**

Uploaded by: Ferguson, Colby

Position: FAV



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 25, 2021

To: Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support HB 7 - Venison Donation Expenses – Income Tax Credit and Grant Program**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 7, legislation that was amended in the House that 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.

Opening more opportunities for hunters to harvest over-populations of deer in the state will assist with curbing the ever-increasing crop loss due to deer damage. Per the 2011 Maryland Ag Statistics survey, deer accounted for \$7.7 million in crop losses in Maryland annually. This damage impact has significantly increased over the last 10 years to nearly \$50 million annually.

**MDFB Policy:** We support a state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation non-profit under a crop damage permit.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 7**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson  
Director of Government Relations

*For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396*

**HB0007\_DNR\_SUP B&T 3-25-2021 .pdf**

Uploaded by: McKitrick, James

Position: FAV



Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

March 25, 2021

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 7 – Income Tax Credit – Venison Donation Expenses – Montgomery County Deer Donation Program***

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supports House Bill 7. This bill, one of several initiatives recommended by the Montgomery County Delegation, seeks to expand eligibility for the existing credit against the State income tax for deer donation expenses to include an individual who hunts and harvests an antlerless deer in Montgomery County and donates the deer carcass to a certain organization in Montgomery County. The bill also allows the existing tax credit program to sunset and replaces it with a new Venison Donation Grant Program, which would provide funding to make deer processors whole for the cost of processing venison for donation.

The existing tax credit program is a reasonable and good incentive for hunters, and adapting it to Montgomery County's deer donation program makes sense. The end result is the adoption of new participants and the increase of the number of deer taken in areas experiencing conflicts with overabundant deer populations. That said, it is the department's preference that the statewide harvest incentive model shift from payments to hunters -- in the form of the existing tax credit program -- to payments to nonprofits and processors in order to avoid any perception of bounty harvesting, an unethical, irresponsible and illegal practice. Shifting to a new Venison Donation Grant Program in 2023 eliminates any potential gray area.

One observation the department respectfully asks the committee to note is that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has previously directed DNR to avoid using any hunting license or stamp funds to underwrite, support or otherwise administer venison donation programs. The department suggests the bill include language clarifying that no Wildlife Management and Protection Fund revenues or federal match will be used to administer or underwrite the grant program or administration of the program. A separate funding source and personnel will be necessary to support the program to avoid the risk of a second audit finding by the federal government related to use of special funds for these efforts.

For the above reasons, we respectfully request the committee grant HB 7 a favorable committee report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick  
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

Contact: James McKitrick, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
JamesW.McKitrick@maryland.gov ♦ 443-510-5013

# **HB7 - Venison Donation Expenses-Income Tax Credit**

Uploaded by: Tulkin, Josh

Position: FAV



7338 Baltimore Ave  
Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740

**Committee: Budget and Taxation**  
**Testimony on: HB7 – “Venison Donation Expenses - Income Tax Credit and Grant Program”**  
**Position: Support**  
**Hearing Date: March 25, 2021**

The Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB7, as amended in the House. This 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.

This bill is especially important now that there are so many communities which are food insecure during the COVID pandemic. It will encourage those hunting deer as well as helping the food banks which will welcome this food for their many clients. Food banks across the state are running out of food because there are so many new clients. High protein donations are especially needed rather than the canned and boxed items which are now rationed. There are existing regulated operations for the preparation of the meat which will be provided to the soup kitchens such as Manna in Montgomery County.

Humane control of deer also decreases the incidence of Lyme Disease, car accidents involving deer, and the destruction of forests, native plants, crops, landscaping, and gardens by deer overpopulation.

In summary, we recommend that the Committee favorably report this legislation.

Linda Rieger  
Member, Natural Places Steering Committee  
lindarieger@verizon.net

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
josh.tulkin@mdsierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.