



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

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 899 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits***

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information on Senate Bill 899. This bill requires the less liberal bag limit for the migratory, Atlantic Population (AP) Canada goose be applied to resident Canada goose bag limits in the State during the AP Canada goose season.

SB 899 would eliminate the opportunity for farmers and hunters to take resident Canada geese consistent with the resident Canada goose bag limits set by the department in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The higher bag limits for resident Canada geese are necessary to minimize the impact of these birds on agricultural fields, community parks and ponds, and turf-based recreational facilities. There is excellent scientifically supported data evidencing that there are distinct populations of AP geese and resident geese. The data demonstrate that there is no risk to our migratory populations from the higher bag limits offered for resident birds.

Maryland is divided into two zones for Canada goose hunting. The AP Hunt Zone includes all of the Eastern Shore, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Harford, Howard and St. Mary's counties and the eastern halves of Carroll, Charles and Prince George's counties. The wintering goose population in this zone is primarily migrants from eastern Canada. Currently, only one goose per day may be harvested by a hunter. The western zone is the remainder of the state. The Canada goose population in this zone is primarily resident geese. Five geese per day may be harvested by a hunter in this Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone. This liberal bag limit is intended to reduce the resident goose population and the damage they cause.

The number of resident Canada geese harvested in the resident zone would be drastically reduced as a result of SB 899. Reducing the harvest on these birds will lead to an increase in damage to private and public landowners by these birds. The bill would also codify the rules for a migratory species in Maryland law. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is ultimately responsible for migratory birds in consultation with the states. SB 899 would derail that process by eliminating the options available to the Department offered by our federal partners and contravening the science that guides that process.

Thank you for allowing the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to provide this letter regarding Senate Bill 899.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick