

February 20, 2021

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

Letter of Opposition - Senate Bill 899 - Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits

Dear Honorable Chair Pinsky and Honorable Members of the Senate:

I write to offer the following letter of opposition to provide further information and clarification for the Committee's consideration on Senate Bill 899. I believe this information will serve to clarify and illustrate the potential ramifications and negative consequences of this proposed legislation.

Senate Bill 899 would have the intended purpose of subjectively lowering the established daily limits on Canada geese harvested in the Canada Goose Resident Population Hunting Zones. These zones are designated by the biologists of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in consultation and cooperation with the Federal scientists and researchers of the United States Fish and Wildlife Administration (USF&W) and the National Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL).

Due to climate change and decreased habitat, many Canada geese have adapted to these conditions by no longer migrating to and from historic breeding grounds in northern Canada. These geese have become endemic, or residential to the Mid-Atlantic and other regions around the United States. As the Canada goose is a voracious large bird averaging around 7 pounds in weight, these residential flocks have become overpopulated and cause great damage when feeding to farmer's cover crops planted by law to mitigate soil erosion. This depletion will further endanger the health of Maryland's greatest natural resource, our Chesapeake Bay

The Canada goose is also notorious for its foul droppings, which contain large amounts of nitrates as well as harboring parasites and other infectious pathogens, such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Giardia* along with *L. monocytogenes*, which can cause bacterial meningitis in both children and adults. In the large quantities left by these residential overpopulated flocks, these droppings can contaminate water sources and cause eutrophication and lower dissolved oxygen levels in water. Thankfully, when properly prepared and cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit, these pathogens are negated, and the goose can be an excellent source of protein.

Resident Canada geese will continue these depredatory behaviors in a large portion of Maryland during the six-week Atlantic Flyway season relatively unchecked if this arbitrary measure is allowed to be enacted. The biologists and naturalists of the DNR, USF&W and BBL who serve our communities in these roles have made these designations and the resultant hunting zones using sound data, observation and science, and these zones and the respective limits on Canada geese per zone should be allowed to stand as previously determined by these subject matter experts.

For the aforementioned reasons, I, along with Maryland farmers, hunters and conservationists, very respectfully request the Committee to consider this information during their deliberations and issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 899.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian Beam