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SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
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SENTE BILL 318
Natural Resources – Fishing and Hunting Rights
SUPPORT

Of relevance to the debate on SB 318 is the Sunday, February 7, 2021 COMMENTARY appearing in the Capital Gazette entitled, **'LOVE WATERFOWL? THANK A HUNTER FOR SAVING THEM.**
<https://www.capitalgazette.com/environment/ac-cn-column-gerald-winegrad-2021207-20210206-hj23k4rxurbwfoulz7ken2v3ni-story.html>

THE HONORABLE PAUL G. PINSKY, Chair
HONORABLE MEMBERS OF SEHEA

The Hunters of Maryland commend Senators Bailey and Simonaire for their introduction of SB 318 which duly recognizes the legacy, tradition and heritage of fishing/hunting in Maryland. From the hills and streams of Western Maryland to the Susquehanna Flats and the Atlantic Ocean, Maryland is renowned for some of the best fishing and hunting anywhere in the world. Ocean City is known as the “White Marlin Capital of the World” – bestowed by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939 -- while the Eastern Shore is known as the “Goose Hunting Capital of the World.” No other state can so boast such titles.

According to the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, the most recent data relevant to fishing and hunting in Maryland, via links below – truly economic engines in their own respective rights – reveals that 445,000 hunters and anglers spent \$815 million each year.

http://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/2019_Maryland_ASCF_Sheet.pdf
<http://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/Maryland-Factsheet.pdf>

From a hunting perspective, few understand what it is like being afield. It’s not the harvesting per se, but the experience of being one with nature generally in the harshest of weather conditions. Hunters, not taxpayers, underwrite virtually 100% of the State’s entire cost for managing wildlife consistent with the American System of Conservation Funding, aka “user fee based” via hunting license/stamp sales. Notably as well, it’s been over 30 years since Maryland has approved a regular hunting license fee increase. Moreover, one need only view legislation over the last decade plus to see that it’s the hunters of Maryland who have advanced legislation to punish poachers, strengthen conservation law enforcement efforts and pursue alternative public funding support.

Enactment of Senate Bill 318 by the 2021 General Assembly will send a message to the citizenry, et al, that hunting and fishing in Maryland are noble pursuits worthy of respect, recognition and support in ways not yet imagined, but known to all as an everlasting legacy.

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