

Chairman Pinsky, and Committee Members:

My name is Charles Howes, I am a retired 25 year veteran of the Maryland Natural Resources Police, and current owner of a large family farm in Calvert County.

I am writing to request your support of Senate Bill 356 – Calvert County – Sunday Hunting. Passage of this legislation would permit the Department of Natural Resources to allow Sunday hunting of game mammals and birds in Calvert County. I am the proud Grandfather of eight. Five have grown up on our farm. My two oldest grandsons are currently serving the United States Army, leaving one grandson and two granddaughters at home. All five are avid hunters.

The main obstacle we face in mentoring these children in becoming safe, ethical hunters is time. My granddaughters, age seven and ten, require close supervision, as you can imagine. Even at their tender age, they were each successful in the recent deer hunting season. Allowing limited Sunday deer hunting in Calvert has been tremendously helpful in allowing them to participate in our family hunting endeavors. School, extracurricular activities, and work schedules complicate scheduling their hunting opportunities. Quite frequently, Sunday is the only day available in our busy lives to take the children hunting.

During my career with the Maryland Natural Resources Police, I worked closely with Calvert County landowners. Occasionally, I would be called to investigate a complaint of a trespassing hunter, but because of our written permission requirement, these instances were rare. I also witnessed an interesting transition during my field assignments, 1970 through 1988, of hunter participation during open hunting seasons. During the early part of my career, hunting activity during the week, especially deer hunting, was frequent and routine. As time passed, finding weekday hunting activity became increasingly more difficult. Current DNR deer kill statistics reflect this trend. Saturdays are by far the most popular and successful hunting day. People simply no longer utilize weekdays for hunting activities as much as in past. Life styles, distances for hunting areas and family obligations all impact on this trend. Consequently, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has identified Sundays as the second most important day in deer hunting success, in Counties where it is allowed.

From a landowner's perspective, I know of no reason why any landowner would oppose this legislation. Maryland requires a hunter to possess written permission from the landowner to hunt. This gives the landowner sole authority to regulate hunting activity on his property. Should a landowner disapprove of Sunday hunting, he can simply refuse to grant permission to any hunter desiring to hunt on Sunday.

Please support this legislation as another step forward in promoting our wonderful hunting heritage.

Thank you!