

## **SB475 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Eckardt, Adelaide

Position: FAV

**ADDIE C. ECKARDT**  
*Legislative District 37*  
Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot  
and Wicomico Counties



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Budget and Taxation Committee

Health and Human Services  
Subcommittee

*Joint Committees*  
Administrative, Executive,  
and Legislative Review

Audit

Children, Youth, and Families

Fair Practices and  
State Personnel Oversight

Pensions

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

*District Office*  
601 Locust Street, Suite 202  
Cambridge, MD 21613  
410-221-6561

**Testimony for Senate Bill 475**  
**Talbot County – Deer and Turkey Hunting – Sundays**  
**March 10, 2021**

Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 475 – Talbot County – Deer and Turkey Hunting – Sundays.

Senate Bill 475 authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow deer hunting on each Sunday of the deer hunting season from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January. The bill also allows DNR to authorize a person to hunt turkey on one Sunday of the spring turkey hunting season during a junior hunt.

This legislation is similar to legislation which allows Sunday hunting on private property in Dorchester County during deer season from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January.

In addition, Sunday hunting is permitted in during all deer seasons in:

- Carroll County
- Kent County
- Montgomery County

During deer firearm season Sunday hunting is permitted in

- Calvert County
- Caroline County
- Charles County
- Harford County
- Queen Anne's County
- Somerset County
- Worcester County

- Anne Arundel County
- Talbot County

During bow season, Sunday deer hunting is allowed on private property in:

- Calvert County
- Caroline County
- Charles County
- Harford County
- Queen Anne's County
- Somerset County
- Talbot County
- Wicomico County
- Worcester County

Sunday turkey hunting on private property is permitted in:

- Calvert County
- Caroline County
- Carroll County
- Charles County
- Kent County

As deer populations continue to grow, local residents have experienced increased agricultural damage. Regulated hunting remains the most cost-effective deer population control mechanism available. Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 475.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Addie C. Eckardt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Addie C. Eckardt

## **SB0475\_SMD.pdf**

Uploaded by: Goldstein, Mathew

Position: FAV



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March 10, 2021

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

Re: SUPPORT SB0475 (HB0325) Talbot County – Deer and Turkey Hunting – Sundays

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland bans, or otherwise limits, the sale of automobiles and other vehicles (Business Regulation Code Ann. §18–101), and the sale of alcohol (Alcoholic Beverages Code Ann. §11–102), on Sundays. Financial institutions must be closed on Sunday (Financial Institutions Code Ann. §5–704). Maryland is one of eleven states where hunting is still banned or otherwise restricted on Sunday (Natural Resources Code Ann. §10-410). Counties (and Baltimore) have avquired a variety of exemptions from some of these Sunday activity restrictions. Secular Maryland supports these exemption requests. We disagree with the state level Sunday activity restrictions.

Sunday is a special day of the week for many Christians. For other citizens the day of rest and worship may be Friday or Saturday, and for some citizens there is no god to worship or no fixed day of rest each week. Maryland law can be, and should be, more accommodating to this diversity of belief among its citizens. Legally banning business and leisure activity on Sundays favors a majority religious practice. Favoring a majority religious practice is not a proper goal of the laws. To the fullest extent feasible, our laws should accommodate minority religious practices along with non-religious and anti-religion beliefs.

The decisions regarding which day to hunt, to buy or sell alcohol, to buy or sell vehicles, to initiate and process financial transactions, etc., are best left to the citizens. State lawmakers can require one day off every week without specifying a particular day of the week by delegating that decision to the affected businesses. Hunting restrictions to accommodate horseback riding, hiking, and the like during the hunting season can be defined for particular hours throughout the week or rotated to different days for each week of the month instead of every Sunday.

## **MD - SB 475 - Sunday Hunting Talbot County - Suppo**

Uploaded by: Santos, Trevor

Position: FAV



**TREVOR W. SANTOS**

Director, Government Relations - State Affairs

tsantos@nssf.org | 202-220-1340 x205 | nssf.org

March 8, 2021

**SENATE BILL 475  
SUPPORT**

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

**Re: Senate Bill 475 – Talbot County – Deer and Turkey Hunting – Sundays**

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (“NSSF”), I submit these comments in support for Senate Bill 475 (“SB 475”) by Senator Eckardt. SB 475 would authorize the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to allow a person to deer hunt and turkey hunt on certain Sundays during hunting season on private property or certain public land in Talbot County under certain circumstances.

As the trade association for America’s firearms, ammunition, hunting, and recreational shooting sports industry, NSSF seeks to promote, protect, and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. We have a membership of thousands of manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, and shooting ranges. Our manufacturer members make the firearms used by law-abiding Maryland sportsmen and women, the U.S. military, and law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

This important piece of legislation will expand current Sunday hunting opportunities for sportsmen, women, and children in Talbot County. Sunday hunting is an excellent vehicle to recruit new hunter-conservationists. Hunting, fishing, and other forms of outdoor recreation have proven physical, psychological, and educational benefits for our nation’s young people. Due to the greater prevalence of academic, athletic, and other competing activities that take place on Saturday, it is likely that allowing Sunday hunting will more than double the number of days children can hunt.

The passage of Senate Bill 475 will help ensure Maryland’s strong hunting heritage can be enjoyed and passed on to future generations of hunters and conservationists, and it is for these reasons that the National Shooting Sports Foundation supports the passage of Senator Eckardt’s Senate Bill 475.

Sincerely,

Trevor W. Santos

# **SB 475\_DNR\_SUP 3-10-21 EHEA.pdf**

Uploaded by: McKittrick, James

Position: FWA





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

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March 10, 2021

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

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan  
Vice Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Support with Amendments – Senate Bill 475 – Talbot County – Deer Hunting – Sundays***

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports Senate Bill 475 with the amendments that would conform the bill with its companion from the House of Delegates. This bill, as amended and passed by the House of Delegates, allows a person in Talbot County to hunt each Sunday of deer season as well as each Sunday of the Spring turkey season. Talbot County is currently authorized for deer hunting on two Sundays during the firearms season as well as five Sundays during the archery season. Sunday hunting during the Spring turkey season is currently not authorized.

In general, the department strongly supports the self-determination of local jurisdictions to expand hunting opportunities within State, and federal rules and regulations. Hunting remains the most cost-effective method for controlling and managing the deer population throughout most of the State. Sunday hunting is important for expanding deer harvest opportunities if the weather causes unfavorable hunting conditions on the Saturday of the same weekend. Likewise, many hunters only have time to hunt on the weekends, and allowing Sunday hunting essentially doubles their opportunity to pursue deer and other game species.

The department therefore believes that recreational hunting will increase in Talbot County by an additional 500 days for deer and 100 days for turkey. On Sundays during the 2019-2020 deer seasons in Talbot County, 101 deer were harvested. The department also estimates that approximately 50 more deer would be harvested on the additional Sundays in Talbot County, though this number depends greatly on how the Sundays were allocated for the three weapon seasons. In sum, increased opportunities to hunt deer and turkey in Talbot County will result in a positive economic and environmental impact for the local recreational hunting industry.

For these reasons, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant SB 475 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick  
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

# **Testimony SB 475 Talbot.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bell, Joyce

Position: UNF

## Testimony of Joyce Bell, Easton, Talbot County, MD 21601

**SB 475**

**OPPOSE**

Good afternoon. My name is Joyce Bell. I live in Talbot County and I oppose this bill.

Talbot County already has 7 Sundays reserved for hunters. This bill would add **10** more Sundays – creating **17** uninterrupted weeks of hunting.

This bill purports to be “a huge economic engine” that would attract hunters to Talbot County to hunt. But the Legislative Services Fiscal Note states that this bill is not expected to materially affect state or local finances, and will have **minimal** overall impact on small businesses. From the hunters I talk to, unleased property to hunt is hard to find, so adding more Sundays would simply be for the convenience of existing hunters.

An increase in Sunday hunting might well cause spending to be reduced by non-hunters, the Wildlife Watchers who, according to US Fish and Wildlife Service US Census Bureau 2016 report, who make up 83% of the population. Comparison of expenditures to hunters and fisherman shows wildlife watchers (photographers, birders, hikers, etc) at the top, spending 75.9 billion, with fishermen spending 46.1 billion, followed last by hunters who spend 26.2 billion. Just google “growth of birdwatching” and you’ll find numerous articles on the “fastest growing hobby in the US”, especially among youth. Hunters are important, but wildlife watchers should be given consideration for their dollar contributions, too.

Even more important: an unintended consequence of hunting on **your** property might be that your **neighbors** have less use of **their** property – from dog walking to bird watching. Property lines in the woods are rarely marked and difficult to know – as is the case behind our property where 4 properties come together. Many horse owners don’t own horse trailers, and their own property is the only place they **can** ride, or even do business.

The horse industry's \$2.1 billion impact on Maryland's economy is huge. Horse farms make up 10% of Maryland's land, and pastures are among the best filtering devices to protect the Bay from runoff. Other advantages of pastures? They are excellent absorbers of carbon dioxide, they are critical habitat for many grassland bird species that are in severe decline, and they provide open space for all to enjoy.

DNR hunting accident reports are woefully incomplete. Here are a few of the unreported incidents (reported in other news sources: a biker was shot in the legs in Tuck. State Park (2014); a man walking his property was struck in the head by a bullet in Montgomery County (2016); a woman shooting a muskrat in her backyard grazed a man's shoulder as he walked in a bordering Patuxant River State Park (2016).

Brenda Kibler – a retired DNR officer, was quoted in an article in the Feb 14 issue of the Star Democrat: (QUOTE) “DNR was often short-staffed, and hunting accidents were common --there were constant hunting complaints...it was ridiculous -- and Sunday is a hard day to enforce because officers need days off, too, “ Ms. Kibler predicts DNR will be even more stretched if hunting is allowed on more Sundays .

How many more accidents would there be if the perception of danger didn't keep so many Marylanders inside -- and especially at a time when doctors in 34 states are praising the health benefits of being **outside in nature, even** handing out “green prescriptions”.

Please do not give this bill a favorable report. Respectfully,

Joyce Bell  
6682 J Oren Road  
Easton, MD 21601

## **March 8.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maki, Bettye

Position: UNF

March 8, 2021

Honorable Committee Members for SB0325

I am against adding more Sundays to the deer hunting season, I am not against hunting and understand the need to cull deer. I am not a hunter but I am an outdoor enthusiast who is quite uneasy walking in a wooded area or across a meadow with the possibility of hunters nearby. How nice it is to have some Sundays when no hunting is permitted. My husband and son are deer hunters, they are uncomfortable when they see or hear non hunters in the woods where they are hunting. It brings their hunting to an end as long as non-hunters are present.

I live in a community where there are 400 plus homes, approximately 48 of these homes back up to Seth Demonstration Forest. There are two entrances into these woods, one from our community and one at the opposite end with an entrance from a county road. People enjoy walking under the tall canopy of trees and the wide natural paths. People walk with their dogs, grandchildren, for themselves and a few horseback riders visit. This bow hunt designated area has 5 Sundays at this time. Increasing Sunday hunting would prevent visiting Seth Forest the complete fall and it could cause human involved hunting accidents to those not aware.

The average person is not aware of hunting seasons. Sunday is a day when most people have time to enjoy the outdoors. It gives the animals a rest and people the freedom to explore without the worry of disturbing hunters or getting shot.

I am a member of the 65 year old Talbot County Bird Club, we presently have 106 members. Our bird walks are on Sundays with few exceptions, one of the reasons Sunday was chosen was in respect to hunting on other days.

If it is more income you are looking for, look at the gain over the expense of allowing more hunting days. The number of hunters applying for licenses is steadily going down. Perhaps it is time to look elsewhere for income.

Maryland has a full calendar of hunting now, please remember there are thousands of us do not hunt but have a right to be in the same place as hunters.

Please do not add more Sunday hunting.

Respectfully,

Bettye Maki  
7448 Jeffreys Way  
Easton, Maryland 21601s



# **testimony - Sunday hunting - 2021 deer - Talbot -**

Uploaded by: Seigler, Jane

Position: UNF



Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 475 - Talbot County -  
Deer and Turkey Hunting - Sundays: OPPOSE

- ❖ **A majority of Marylanders oppose Sunday hunting.** An independent statewide poll conducted by Gonzales Research and Media Services in 2018 found that 68.9% of respondents oppose Sunday hunting, and 78% would decide to alter their recreational plans to avoid hunters. In a Maryland Horse Council 2016 poll, 85% of respondents said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters. Even DNR's own commissioned survey found that a majority of the general population does not favor Sunday hunting and does not want to see it expanded.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ **This bill would expand hunting in Talbot from only seven Sundays to every Sunday for three and a half months in the Fall and Winter, plus an additional Sunday in the Spring.**
- ❖ **This bill would allow Sunday hunting on public as well as private land.** Since the advent of the pandemic, widespread use of outdoor recreation and natural resources by the general public has only increased. For example, attendance at Maryland State Parks in 2020 increased 45% over 2019, which was also a record year.<sup>2</sup> **Now is not the time to increase general public exposure to possible hunting risks.**
- ❖ **The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), has recently begun to conclude that the deer population in Maryland has stabilized, and additional deer reduction measures are not needed and even contraindicated.** The deer population in Maryland has declined from a high of almost 300,000 in 2002 to just over 200,000 now. DNR recently reduced bag limits (i.e., the number of deer allowed to be taken), implicitly acknowledging that reducing the deer population is not a priority. According to DNR's recent survey, hunters want to see the deer population maintained or increased.
- ❖ **Deer over population is a serious health, public safety and economic problem in Maryland. However, Sunday hunting is demonstrably not an effective solution to that problem. For example, in all but one of the five Maryland counties that vastly expanded Sunday hunting, the deer harvest has fallen. (See footnote 7)**
- ❖ Therefore, **Sunday hunting is not an effective deer management tool; it is rather a hunter convenience tool.** Convenience is surely a benefit, but it is a benefit that should be available to all constituents equitably, not just one small segment. According to the DNR survey, only 8% of the general population have hunted in the last 2 years, and 84% have never hunted at all.
- ❖ **The Maryland horse industry represents \$2.1 billion in economic impact; 28,000 jobs; \$1 billion in annual spending by participants; \$78 million in tax revenue. Over \$73 million in infrastructure improvements to public and private facilities around the state. There are over**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018\\_DeerPublicOpinionSurvey.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018_DeerPublicOpinionSurvey.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2021/02/04/lt-governor-boyd-k-rutherford-maryland-department-of-natural-resources-announce-45-percent-increase-in-maryland-state-parks-attendance-in-2020/>

100,000 horses in Maryland (more per square mile than any state in the Union), and 51.8% of Maryland households contain horse enthusiasts.<sup>3</sup> There are horses in every county in the state.<sup>4</sup> The majority of Maryland riders are trail riders.<sup>5</sup>

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes over 40 breed, interest and discipline associations, plus horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses and race tracks, to the owners of international level competition horses, local sport horses, trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. The owner of Pimlico, Laurel and Rosecroft racetracks is a member, as are vets, tack stores, and other farms, businesses and enthusiasts throughout the state. As such, we stand for over 30,000 Marylanders. Every Maryland county, without exception, is home to hundreds to thousands of horses. (See footnote 3) There are more horse per square mile in Maryland than in any state in the Union. (See attached fact sheet.)

The horse industry in Maryland is a large, engaged and thriving constituency, and a strong economic engine: 28,000 direct equine related jobs; 16,000 properties occupying over 705,000 acres (almost 10% of Maryland's total land area, and over 25% of Maryland's agricultural land) The industry represents \$2.1 billion in annual economic impact, generating \$78 million in annual tax revenue. Horse industry participants spend \$1 billion dollars annually. There are currently \$73 million dollars in infrastructure investments planned or in the pipeline for public and private equestrian facilities throughout the state. Thus, legislative actions that affect the equine industry have a broad economic effect.

#### POSITION

The Horse Council opposes SB 475.

#### BACKGROUND

For over 20 years, the Maryland Horse Council has worked to ensure fair use of shared natural resources during hunting seasons, by seeking to preserve Sundays as the one day of the week when children and adults who are hikers, birdwatchers, dog walkers, trail riders and other outdoor enthusiasts could enjoy the outdoors without concern for adverse interactions with hunters. Almost 20 years ago, we helped defeat a number of statewide Sunday hunting bills. Proponents of Sunday hunting then changed tactics, seeking to introduce Sunday hunting on a county-by-county basis, which we also opposed vigorously. Sometimes they were successful; sometimes not. When they were successful, they succeeded in making an already complicated situation more complicated, making it more difficult for others to plan their outings, and for Natural Resources Police to effectively crack down on poachers and irresponsible hunters,

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<sup>3</sup> See attached fact sheet.

<sup>4</sup> According to the 2010 Maryland Equine Census (current numbers are likely about 25% higher, based on current total statewide population): Allegany 350; Baltimore 8950; Carroll 6050; Frederick 7850; Garrett 1500; Harford 6200; Howard 4350; Montgomery 7900; Washington 3750; Anne Arundel 4500; Calvert 1350; Charles 1750; Prince George's 7100; Saint Mary's 2300; Caroline 1300; Cecil 6200; Kent 1200; Queen Anne's 1700; Talbot 1500; Dorchester 350; Somerset 270; Wicomico 1800; Worcester 880

<sup>5</sup> <http://equiery.com/trail-riding-tops-reader-survey/>

which has caused even more negative encounters between irresponsible hunters and other users.<sup>6</sup>

The Maryland Horse Council has proposed reasonable compromises that would still allow fair use of shared natural resources, by cutting off Sunday hunting, where allowed, at 10:30 am. This compromise still gives both hunters and trail riders and others plenty of Sunday access to opportunities. This compromise has been embraced by some legislators, who have praised the Horse Council for this reasonable approach, and it has been adopted by Montgomery, Kent and Wicomico Counties. Now we are facing a bill that would add more days of all day Sunday hunting in Talbot County. This bill does nothing to improve the situation for Natural Resources Police and continues to infringe on the fair rights of other users of our shared natural resources in Maryland.

The issue of recreational Sunday hunting is certainly a fraught one. In a November 2018 independent Gonzales statewide poll, the vast majority of respondents opposed Sunday hunting:

SUNDAY HUNTING Oppose 68.9%; Favor 21.9%

Breakdown:

Strongly Favor 13.5%

Somewhat Favor 8.4%

Somewhat Oppose 15.4%

Strongly Oppose 53.5%

These majorities opposed to Sunday hunting are true in Baltimore Metro, Washington Metro AND Rural areas. Rural Maryland opposed Sunday hunting 60.5% vs 34.1% in favor. Even DNR's own commissioned survey found that a majority of the general population does not favor Sunday hunting and does not want to see it expanded. (See footnote 1.) This bill directly contravenes that clear public opinion.

It is important to make clear that the Horse Council is not opposed to hunting. Many of our members are hunters of deer, other game mammals and game birds. We just want to ensure that everyone has a safe option for enjoyment of the outdoors, especially in this time of COVID. According to DNR's survey, only 8% of the general population has hunted in the last two years, and 84% has never hunted. Compare that with the 24% who reported making frequent or occasional trips specifically to view and experience wildlife in their native habitat for photography or other non-hunting purposes. (See footnote 1.) Since this survey, it is clear that the COVID pandemic has dramatically increased the level of outdoor activity and use of natural resources. DNR recently announced, for example, that 2020 State Park attendance increased by 45% to 21.5 million visitors. ***Lt. Governor Rutherford stated: "With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic changing the way we live, work, and play, more and more Marylanders are finding affordable, socially-distant, and family-friendly recreation opportunities at our parks and public lands,"*** (See footnote 2.) Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, and are unaware that they may encounter hunters in the woods. Now is not the time to roll the dice and increase the chances of

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<sup>6</sup> In a 2016 Maryland Horse Council survey, 35% of respondents reported "adverse incidents" with hunters while trail riding, ranging from rudeness to deliberate attempts to spook horses, threatening with firearms, and firing of "warning" shots. Significant percentages of DNR's survey respondents also reported problems when encountering hunters.

potential adverse interactions between hunters and members of the public who are relatively new to the outdoors.

Through our years of studying DNR data, we are unconvinced that recreational hunting is the best solution for deer overpopulation. These data reveal that despite expansion of Sunday hunting in some other jurisdictions, deer harvest numbers are dropping. (And given the widely acknowledged “ghost doe” problem (i.e., some hunters phone in false reports of the number of does harvested, in order to become eligible to shoot a trophy buck), those numbers may actually be artificially inflated.) We have looked at DNR harvest numbers in the five counties that have had a large number of Sunday hunting days added in recent years. In all but one of the counties, the harvest numbers declined substantially after Sundays were added.<sup>7</sup>

It is sometimes argued that the declining numbers of recreational hunters is in part responsible for the declining harvest, but that begs the question of whether relying on recreational hunters is therefore “backing the wrong horse” in the effort to reduce the deer population. ***Adding Sundays demonstrably does not increase the harvest; it just affords recreational hunters the luxury of choosing which weekend day to devote to hunting, thereby spreading the same number of deer kills over seven days instead of six. In the DNR survey, almost 60% of the hunters did not indicate that they would harvest more deer if Sundays were available.*** So adding Sundays is arguably more a matter of hunter convenience than sound deer management. Convenience is surely a benefit, but it is a benefit that should be available to all constituents equitably, not just one small segment. According to DNR’s survey, only 8% of the general population has hunted in the last two years, and 84% has never hunted. Compare that with the 24% who reported making frequent or occasional trips specifically to view and

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<sup>7</sup>Allegany - An increase of from 6 to 13 Sundays from 2013 to 2016. Harvest decline. **In 2013-2014, the total harvest was 3636** (with 5 Archery (“A”) and 1 Firearms (“FA”) Sundays); in 2014-2015, the total harvest was 3051 (5A, 3FA, 1 Junior (“J”), and 2 Muzzleloader (“M”)); in 2015-2016, the total harvest 3368 (8A, 2FA, 1J, 2M). Harvest numbers continue to be depressed: 2016-2017: 2907; 2017-2018: 3361; 2018-2019: 3641; **2019-2020: 2846.**

Carroll - An increase of from 8 to 14 Sundays. Harvest decline. **2013-2014 - total harvest 5915** (5A, 3F, 2M); 2014-2015 - total harvest 5464 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 5238 (8A, 3FA, 1J, 2M). Recent numbers are still below pre-Sunday increase numbers: 2016-2017: 5663; 2017-2018: 5896; 2018-2019: 5421; **2019-2020: 5523.**

Frederick - Increase of from 6 to 14 Sundays. Harvest decline. **2013-2014 - total harvest 8040** (5A, 1F); 2014-2015 - total harvest 7272 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 7149 (8A, 3FA, 1J, 2M). Recent numbers are still below pre-Sunday increase numbers: 2016-2017: 7556; 2017-2018: 7354; 2018-2019: 6545; **2019-2020: 6358.**

Garrett - Increase of from 6 to 13 Sundays. 2013-2014 - total harvest 3868 (5A, 1F); 2014-2015 - total harvest 4453 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 4408 (8A, 2FA, 1J, 2M). 2016-2017: 4342; 2017-2018: 5349; 2018-2019: 4973; 2019-2020: 4607.

Washington - Increase of from 6 to 13 Sundays. Harvest decline. **2013-2014 - total harvest 6376** (5A, 1F); 2014-2015 - total harvest 5087 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 5282 (8A, 2F, 1J, 2M). Harvest numbers continue to be depressed: 2016-2017: 4736; 2017-2018: 4593; 2018-2019: 4620; **2019-2020: 4041.**

experience deer in their native habitat for photography or other non-hunting purposes. (See footnote 1.)

Contravening many arguments that Sunday hunting is needed to help control a burgeoning deer population is the fact that the size of the Maryland deer herd has been steadily declining from a peak of about 295,000 in 2002 to about 214,000 recently. Indeed, DNR recently reduced the bag limits (i.e., the number of deer allowed to be taken), implicitly acknowledging that reducing the deer population is not a priority. In its proposal to reduce the bag limits, DNR stated that this change was being proposed “in response to hunter request.”<sup>8</sup> According to DNR’s recent survey, hunters want to see the deer population maintained or increased.

It is also sometimes argued that recreational hunters need Sundays because they have other things to do on Saturdays - a situation that plainly applies to most of Maryland’s families who use outdoor resources, be they hunters, birdwatchers, dog walkers, mountain bikers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and trail riders. So why should one group get special consideration? Where is the balancing of the public good? The number of licensed hunters in Maryland, fewer than 100,000, pales in comparison to the state’s overall population of about 6 million. Compare the number of hunters, for example, to the number of people who use Maryland’s park land for hiking and other forms of recreation. In the Horse Council’s statewide survey on Sunday hunting, 68% of respondents ride on trails on public or private land one or more days a week. And, perhaps most significantly, 85% said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters. Another important factor to consider in the balancing of the public good is the fact that, unlike many other states, Maryland’s hunting seasons are very long, with liberal bag limits. Part of the basis for these long seasons is that Maryland lacked Sunday hunting for most of its history. When Sunday hunting was introduced, there was not a corresponding shortening of the hunting seasons, so now there are both long seasons and increasing Sunday hunting opportunities.

This bill would authorize Sunday hunting on both public and private land. We of course recognize that private land owners have some right to decide what uses they want to allow on their land. But such rights have never been absolute, as any review of zoning and land use rules can plainly establish. And, as a practical matter the public/private land distinction affords little relief since public and private tracts are often relatively small, non-contiguous, intertwined and rarely well-marked. In our survey, referenced above, 56% of respondents said they ride on trails that cross both public and private land.

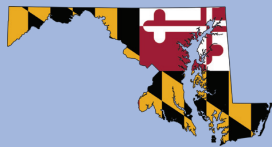
## CONCLUSION

We urge the Committee to give SB 475 an unfavorable report.

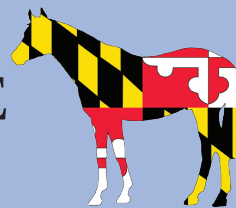
Respectfully submitted,  
Maryland Horse Council  
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)

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<sup>8</sup> [http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018-2020\\_ProposedSeasons.pdf](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018-2020_ProposedSeasons.pdf) See also [https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/local/hunters-oppose-md-and-w-v-a-parks-deer-control-plan/article\\_febb0cd6-2fa9-11e7-9663-93a45fa7c007.html](https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/local/hunters-oppose-md-and-w-v-a-parks-deer-control-plan/article_febb0cd6-2fa9-11e7-9663-93a45fa7c007.html)



# THE MARYLAND HORSE INDUSTRY



Thoroughbred & Standardbred horse racing & breeding ♦ trail riding ♦ steeplechase ♦ sport horse competitions ♦ rodeo ♦ carriage driving ♦ therapy programs ♦ recreation ♦ rescue and more

## A Dynamic Agricultural Entity

# 705,000 ACRES



25% of the State's agricultural land

Pastures are among the best filtering devices to protect the Chesapeake Bay from harmful runoff

10% of Maryland land



\$80,000,000 on feed, hay and straw



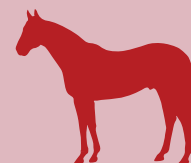
88,000 equine acres preserved forever as farmland



## Number of Horses in Maryland

# 101,457

Horses in Maryland - making MD the number one state in terms of the number of horses per square mile!



10.5 horses per square mile!

## 200

Equine Orgs. Statewide

## 16,000

Horse Farms & Stables

## 35

different equine disciplines

## 40

 breeds

## Integral to the State's Economy



# \$2.1 Billion

Economic Impact



## \$78m

 in tax revenue

## 28,000

 industry jobs

## \$1B

 spent by participants

## A Global Equine Identity



51.8% of households in MD contain horse enthusiasts



10,000 Youths served by MD's Educational Programs

1,500 4H Horse Projects

765 Licensed Riding & Boarding Stables

55 High School Interscholastic Teams

22 Pony Clubs

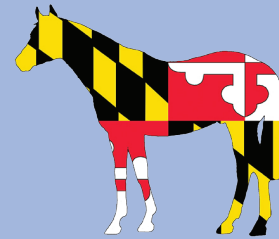
12 College Equine Teams & Clubs



MD is home to International gems:

Triple Crown Race - the Preakness since 1875  
International 5-Star at Fair Hill in 2020

# THE MARYLAND HORSE INDUSTRY ECONOMIC IMPACT



## The Racing Sector



Adds **\$365 million** in value to the state economy



Racing Sector Total  
Economic Impact of:  
**\$572 million**



Supports  
**5,214 jobs**

## The Competition Sector

Competition Sector Total  
Economic Impact of:

**\$270  
million**



Supports **3,346 jobs**



Adds **\$162 million**  
in value to the state economy



## The Recreation Sector



Supports  
**4,971 jobs**



Adds **\$234 million** in  
value to the state economy

Recreation  
Sector  
Total Economic  
Impact of:  
**\$382 million**



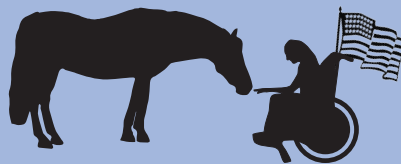
## The Equine Therapy Sector



Adds  
**\$8.4 million**  
in value to the state  
economy

**40**

Therapeutic Riding Centers  
Including over a dozen  
Veterans groups



### Information provided by

The American Horse Council  
Foundation 2017

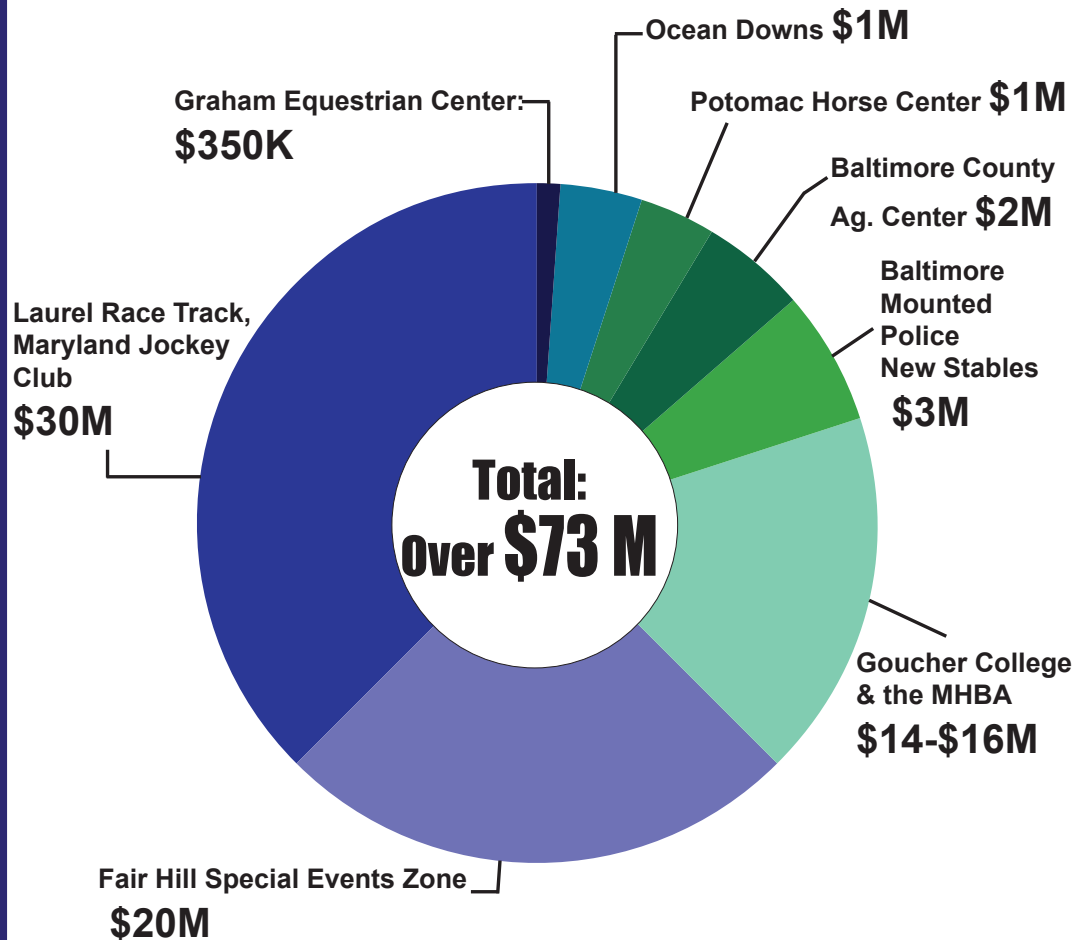
Institute for Governmental  
Service and Research  
University of Maryland 2017

Maryland Equine Census,  
USDA 2010



# Investing in Maryland Horse Industry Infrastructure:

Improvements currently planned or in the pipeline



- \$30M Laurel Race Track, Maryland Jockey Club has spent over \$30M
- \$20M Fair Hill Special Events Zone Phase I, construction starts Fall 2019
- \$14M Goucher College & Maryland Horse Breeders Assoc. Equestrian Center
- \$3M Baltimore Mounted Police New Stables, B&O Railroad Museum
- \$2M Baltimore County Ag. Center Show Ring, under construction
- \$1M Potomac Horse Center
- \$1M Ocean Downs Racing Admin. Building & Testing Barn
- \$350K Graham Equestrian Center

