

Support of SB 603 - Caroline County - Sunday Hunt

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Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 10, 2021

To: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: Support of SB 603 - Caroline County - Sunday Hunting - Deer Hunting Seasons

On behalf of our member families in Caroline County, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 603, legislation that expands Sunday hunting in Caroline County by authorizing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow a person in Caroline County to hunt deer on each Sunday of the deer hunting seasons from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January, inclusive.

Crop damage created by deer is nearly \$50 per acre today. These numbers are even higher on the Eastern Shore. DNR reports show that more than 10% of the deer harvested this hunting season were done on Sundays. Opening Caroline County to have these additional Sunday hunting dates will allow the hunters to help address the overpopulation of deer in Caroline County.

MDFB Policy: We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 603 AND ENCOURAGES A FAVORABLE REPORT.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396

SB0603_DNR_SUP 3-10-21 EHEA.pdf

Uploaded by: McKitrick, James

Position: FAV



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

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 603 – Caroline County – Sunday Hunting – Deer Hunting Seasons

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports Senate Bill 603. This bill would expand Sunday hunting for deer in Caroline County. Currently, Caroline County is authorized for Sunday deer hunting during the firearm season, five Sundays during the deer archery season and the one day of the deer season for junior hunters only.

In general, the department strongly supports the self-determination of local jurisdictions to expand hunting opportunities within the State. Hunting remains the most cost-effective method for controlling the deer population throughout Maryland. The department advises that Sunday hunting has contributed positively to managing the State's white-tailed deer population in the 20 counties where it is now permitted. Sunday hunting can be especially important if the weather causes unfavorable hunting conditions on the Saturday of the same weekend. Likewise, many hunters only have time to hunt on weekends, so allowing Sunday hunting essentially doubles their opportunity to pursue deer.

Hunters have harvested over 75,000 deer on Sundays since becoming a legal hunting day in 2003. On Sundays during the 2019-2020 deer seasons in Caroline County, 216 deer were harvested. DNR estimates an additional 50 to 75 deer would be harvested on the additional Sundays in Caroline County as a result of this bill. In addition, the committee will note that SB 603 opens public lands to Sunday hunting. Caroline County includes several public land areas, including the popular Tuckahoe and Martinak State Parks. It is important to note that these parks would not be open to Sunday hunting. Existing law prohibits Sunday hunting on lands managed by the Maryland Park Service.

For the above reasons, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant SB 603 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKittrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

Contact: James McKittrick, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
JamesW.McKittrick@maryland.gov ♦ 443-510-5013

MD - SB 603 - Sunday Hunting Caroline County - Sup

Uploaded by: Santos, Trevor

Position: FAV



TREVOR W. SANTOS

Director, Government Relations - State Affairs

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March 8, 2021

**SENATE BILL 603
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 603 – Caroline County – Sunday Hunting – Deer Hunting Seasons

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 603 (“SB 603”) by Senators Herhsey and Eckardt. SB 603 would authorize the Department of Natural Resources to allow a person to hunt deer on each Sunday of the deer hunting seasons from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January, inclusive, in Caroline County.

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 Caroline 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 603 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 Senate Bill 603.

Sincerely,

Trevor W. Santos

Testimony Caroline SB 603 -hunting accidents.pdf

Uploaded by: Bell, Joyce

Position: UNF

OPPOSITION TO HUNTING ON SUNDAYS SENATE BILLS

Joyce & Wayne Bell, Easton, Talbot County, MD

SB 356 (Calvert), **SB 603** (Caroline), **SB 475** (Talbot), **SB 605** Queen Anne, **SB 633** (Worcester)

These bills are fiscally neutral and the deer population has stabilized, if not declined (as evidenced by DNR's reduced bag limits. These are simply bills of convenience for the 2% of Marylanders who hunt, and they directly contravene the opinions of a majority of Marylanders -- as evidenced by a DNR commissioned survey, and well as other surveys -- who do not favor Sunday hunting or want it expanded.

DNR's hunting accident incident reports are shockingly incomplete. One unreported accident occurred in 2014 when a biker in Tuckahoe State Park was shot in the legs. In 2016 an 87 year old man was struck in the head by a bullet while walking on his own property which adjoined Patuxant River Park in Montgomery County. In 2019 a woman was shooting a groundhog in her back yard and grazed a man's shoulder; he was walking in a park which bordered her land. Our neighbor's dog was killed. The windshields of cars in our driveway were pockmarked with birdshot.

Here are a few of the many recorded DNR hunting incident reports:

2019 An unknown Washington County Deer Hunter... shot a crossbow bolt through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victim's driveway. Deer frequent the lawn of this residence and other residences within the neighborhood most evenings.

2017 A Talbot County hunter shot at 2 deer with 12 gauge shotgun slugs. A shot missed and struck an occupied residence just to one side of the front door.

2017 A Carroll County deer hunter sent a 7 mm projectile through the side of a residence, through the bedroom wall, through a wooden dresser, then through a closet all before coming to rest in a pile of towels in the closet. Two people were in the bed room at the time.

2017 A Cecil County deer hunter took two shots at deer with a 30/30 rifle toward the direction of a neighboring farm. One of the shots struck a dining room window of the adjacent residence ...(and) was found in the windowsill.

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 other accidents would there be if the perception of danger deprived so many Marylanders of the ability to recreate outside?

Our population is growing -- there is currently a 200% increase in real estate sales on the Eastern Shore. Hunting accidents and confrontations are bound to increase due to increasing pressures on access to finite public and private outdoor spaces on which to recreate. This is even more true because all public and private properties are intertwined.

We should accommodate wildlife enthusiasts who spend 3 times more money than hunters spend (US Fish & Wildlife Services Census Bureau report, 2016, p 7), rather than create obstacles to their enjoyment and access to the outdoors

A friend told me "This Blue Law is not antiquated - rather it is anchored in basic cultural values, developed over centuries." There should be an equitable division of time and place, and this should not be adversarial.

If the rationale for more Sundays on which to hunt is to produce more income, we should consider alternatives – what about a Lottery for Wildlife?

So much energy, time, and dollars have been wasted on the Sunday hunting issue. I believe it is time for us to come together with facts and reason to resolve this issue for once and for all.

Joyce and Wayne Bell, Easton, Talbot County, Maryland

Excerpts from 10 years of DNR’s Annual Hunting Accident Reports (prepared by MD Hunter Education Program) <https://dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/Pages/Hunting-Incident-Reports.aspx>

2020

--- A Frederick County resident observed damage to the exterior of their residence, which was consistent with that of pellet strikes from a shotgun. While investigating officers located no hunting activity in the area, the incident did occur during the end of spring turkey season.

2019

---- A 61-year-old Washington County Woodchuck Hunter was shooting from the front of their residence off a picnic table for support when one shot went errant and struck a person fishing at an adjacent pond, grazing their shoulder. The victim was approximately two tenths of a mile away obscured by heavy brush and tree cover. Rimfire .22 long rifle ammunition from a rifle was the implement used.

--- An unknown Washington County Deer Hunter (Archery season) shot a crossbow bolt through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victims driveway. Deer frequent the lawn of this residence and other residences within the neighborhood most evenings.

---- A Montgomery County residence received a broken window caused by a stray bullet fired from a rifle. The projectile was recovered on scene lodged in between two plates of glass. No suspects at the time of the shooting but several shots were reported just before the window received damage.

2017

--- A 26 year old Talbot County deer hunter (firearms season) shot at two deer with 12 gauge shotgun slugs. The first deer was struck and ran 40 yards before collapsing, the second deer was shot at but the first slug went over its back, the second shot dropped the deer in the location where it was standing. Apparently the slug that missed struck an occupied residence just to one side of the front door.

--- An unknown Carroll County deer hunter (firearms season) sent a 7mm projectile through the side of a residence, through the bedroom wall, through a wooden dresser, then through a closet wall before coming to rest in a pile of towels in the closet. Two people were in the bedroom at the time but neither was injured. A search of nearby farms was unsuccessful in locating any hunter(s).

--- A 52 year old Cecil County deer hunter (late firearms season) took two shots at a deer with a 30/30 rifle toward the direction of a neighboring farm. One of the shots (both of which missed the deer) struck a dining room window of the adjacent residence and stopped, being found on the windowsill. During the investigation it was determined that the round that struck the window had ricocheted off of the ground. The distance from the shooter to the house was 398 yards.

(DNR's on-line annual report for 2017 is identical to DNR'S 2016's report – the 2016 appears to be missing)

2015

--- A 16 year old Allegany County turkey hunter fired two (2) shots from a 12 gauge shotgun at what they believed to be the white head of a spring gobbler. The shot traveled approximately 53 yards and struck a 70 year old camouflaged turkey hunter in the face. This hunter had walked into the woods, sat down and was listening for turkey's completely camouflaged except for the side of his face which is what the shooter was observing and mistook for a turkey.

--- Carroll County Fox Hunter sent a 6mm rifle round through a patio glass door. The round went through a vinyl garden hose and a plastic lawn chair before going through the door and striking a kitchen chair. The homeowner was and they were in bed sleeping.

--- A 52 year old Kent County Turkey Hunter (Spring Season) took two shots at a gobbler out in an open field. The second shot was at the bird while in flight. One pellet struck the storm door of an adjacent house causing the glass to shatter. The homeowner was present in the home at the time.

2014

--- A 50 year old Carroll County Fox Hunter sent a 6mm rifle round through a patio glass door. The round went through a vinyl garden hose and a plastic lawn chair before going through the door and striking a kitchen chair. The homeowner was the only occupant in the residence at the time and they were in bed sleeping.

2013 --- A 47 year old Calvert County rabbit hunter received a gunshot (shotgun) wound to his body/thigh/head when he was shot by a 15 year old hunting partner.The shooter stated that he could not see the other hunter when he shot at the rabbit

--- The victim A 52 year old Charles County deer hunter shot his 22 year old son with a rifle across an open field. The shooter and the victim had been hunting together and at dusk the shooter fired out at movement in the field which he mistook for a deer walking through the field .

--- A 28 year old Charles County deer hunter while hunting within the safety zone ---discharged his shotgun resulting in the rifled slug passing through a window of the residence striking a chandelier in the dining room and becoming embedded in a wall.

--- A rifle round was recovered from a Frederick County home during the second day of the extended fire arms deer season. The round went through the wall of the home and struck a sliding glass door causing it to shatter. The round was recovered at the scene by the sheriff's department. The nearest wooded area was over 400 yards away. Property Damage Only

--- A rifle round was recovered from a "second" Frederick County home during the extended firearms deer season. The round entered through the front wall of the residence blew out the drywall in the living room at which time the bullet came to rest on the floor and was recovered by the homeowner. The bullet was a full metal jacket round (illegal to use on big game)

2012 --- A 62 year old Harford County landowner was struck by a random shot on their property. Upon investigation it was determined the landowner had been hearing a volley of shots repeatedly behind her home. As she and her husband went outside to investigate, a piece of shot struck her in the left forearm. Law enforcement responded and never found hunters in the area. Non Fatal.

--- A home in Dorchester County was struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the homeowner heard shots and found a French door in the back of their home was shattered due a projectile striking the lower left hand pane. The area behind the home is a public hunting area.

2011--- A 41 year old Carroll County woman was struck in the right leg by a stray projectile while she was in her back yard Upon investigation it was determined two individuals were plinking and shooting at squirrels & birds with a .22 cal. rifle in a wooded area behind her residence. Due to an unsafe backstop, it was determined their projectile traveled approximately .26 miles to the victim's property causing

the leg injury. --- A 57 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 57 year old hunting companion who he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter and victim had split up to hunt deer.The shooter observed a dark movement coming towards his location. The shooter was using a .30-06 scoped rifle. The shooter advised he determined he was shooting at a deer by looking through his scope, and shot at center mass.

--- A 48 year old Caroline County deer hunter shot his 46 year old hunting companion that he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter heard a disturbance of brush and saw movement, thinking it was a deer. The shooter fired a crossbow bolt at the movement at a distance of 62 yards, striking the victim in his left tibia.

--- A 16 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 19 year old hunting companion while shooting at a running deer: Upon investigation 8 hunters had organized a deer drive in a marshy dense wooded area. 5 hunters were pushing deer while 3 were standers. As a deer passed between two standers, the shooter shot at a running deer, striking his hunting companion in both femurs with a .12 ga. shotgun using #4 buckshot at a distance of 60 yards. The shooter advised he never saw the victim. Both hunters were wearing daylight fluorescent orange. Non Fatal.

--- A 56 year old Dorchester County turkey hunter shot his 36 year old hunting companion, mistaking him for game: Upon investigation it was determined the two hunters entered their hunting area and posted three turkey decoys in an open field. They then split up to hunt the area and the shooter advised he did not see which direction the victim went..... the shooter saw a movement then shot. He had shot his hunting companion. The movement he saw was the victim putting his cell phone away. The victim was shot at a distance of 38 yards. The victim received 24 #4 shotgun pellets which were fired from the shooters 12 .ga shotgun. The victim was struck in the right side of his body receiving wounds in his head, neck, shoulder, torso, calf, knee, and ankle. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting. Non Fatal.

--- A 13 year old Dorchester County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter discharged a .45 cal. muzzleloader at a deer 6 minutes after legal shooting hours. The projectile, missing the deer, traveled 242 yards striking a house 48 inches from the ground. As the projectile entered the house, it penetrated exterior and interior walls and lodge in a recliner. A resident in the home was sitting in the chair at the time and received a red mark on their shoulder where the projectile stopped on impact. Non Fatal

2010

--- During the 2010 Firearm Deer Season, residents of a home located in the area of Walkersville (Frederick County), reported their house had been struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the home had been struck by a projectile doing damage to the exterior & interior walls..... It was never determined who may have been the shooter, but one scenario did reveal a hunter had fired a .30.30 rifle at a deer pointed in the direction that the home approximately 3,940 feet away. No evidence was found to support charges. Non Fatal.

--- A 45 year old Frederick County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter had discharged a .12 gauge shotgun using slugs at a herd of deer. The gun jammed, the shooter cleared the gun, turned and shot at another deer in the direction of the home. The shooter advised he had become disoriented as to the direction he was shooting. **The slug entered the home at a distance of 114 yards, traveled through the exterior and two interior walls, through two rooms, and into appliances and home furnishings.** No one was in the home at the time of the incident.

--- A 53 year old **Howard County deer hunter was shot by his 36 year old hunting companion.** The shooter shot at a standing deer with a .12 gauge slug in an open field at approximately 243 yards. The bullet missed the deer, striking the victim sitting in a wooden ground blind at the opposite end of the field. The victim received injuries to his right arm and hand. Non Fatal. Charges pending an investigation

--- A 46 year old Queen Anne's County deer hunting was shot by his 25 year old hunting companion. With both subjects participating in a deer drive, the shooter shot at a running deer twice with a .20 gauge shotgun slug. **A slug traveled 70 yards, striking the victim positioned at the opposite end of the field in the left leg.** Non Fatal.

2009

--- A 57 year-old goose hunter in Kent County was shot by another hunter while attempting to retrieve a wounded goose. **The victim received a minor wound to the face from a shotgun pellet which deflected off the water striking the victim.**

--- **A window was broken at an occupied daycare facility from a slug fired by a shotgun in Howard County.** Several hunters were found in the area and interviewed by several police agencies.

--- A window in a house was struck and broken by a sabot round fired by a deer hunter in Talbot County. The investigation found that in this case , the hunter was not negligent and charges were not filed.

--- **While checking vacant buildings, several Frederick County Sheriff Deputy vehicles were struck by shot gun pellets** causing minor damage. Several individuals who were hunting quail in the area were located and charges were filed by the States Attorney's office for Reckless Endangerment.

21 03 10 Sunday Hunting.pdf

Uploaded by: Martinez, Al

Position: UNF

I represent Tuckahoe Equestrian Center with 300 members, many of who are active trail riders in Tuckahoe State Park which straddles Caroline and Queen Anne counties. The park trails and meadows are frequented by scores of trail riders especially on weekends as most of them work during the week. As well here are MANY others enjoying the multi-use trails – hikers, dog walkers, families with children, bikers, bird watchers and nature enthusiasts of all kinds.

Most Marylanders oppose Sunday hunting and many riders are forced to change their riding locations to avoid hunters. The vast majority of MD's population has never even hunted. Horses are easily spooked by gunshots. Accidents can easily happen when people encounter careless hunters.

The pandemic has brought an enormous increase in people seeking recreation in the States parks. As well, the horse industry is a major source of revenue for the State with 28,000 equine industry related jobs, \$1 billion in horse related spending and approximately \$78 million in tax revenue from horse related industries.

Over 100,000 horses are in MD with horses in every county and the majority are trail riders. Tuckahoe Equestrian Center does not oppose hunting as many of our members are hunters but we strongly oppose any expansion of Sunday hunting.

testimony - Sunday hunting - 2021 deer - Caroline.

Uploaded by: Seigler, Jane

Position: UNF

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on
SB 603 - Caroline County - Sunday hunting - Deer Hunting Seasons: 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.¹
- ❖ **This bill would allow Sunday hunting in Caroline, which currently has only nine Sundays, on every Sunday for three and a half months in the Fall and Winter.**
- ❖ **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.² **Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons. 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 total 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 hunted in the last 2 years at the time of the survey, and 84% have never hunted at all.** Only two percent of the population hold hunting licenses.
- ❖ **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**

¹ https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018_DeerPublicOpinionSurvey.pdf

² <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/>

infrastructure improvements to public and private facilities around the state. There are over 100,000 horses in Maryland (more per square mile than any state in the Union), and 51.8% of Maryland households contain horse enthusiasts.³ There are horses in every county in the state.⁴ The majority of Maryland riders are trail riders.⁵

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 603.

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,

³ See attached fact sheet.

⁴ 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

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

which has caused even more negative encounters between irresponsible hunters and other users.⁶

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 allow all day Sunday hunting in Caroline County for three and a half months of the year. 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. 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 potential adverse interactions between hunters and members of the public who are relatively new to the outdoors.

⁶ 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.

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.**⁷

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

⁷Allegany - 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, J1, M2) 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.**

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 207,000 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.”⁸ 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 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

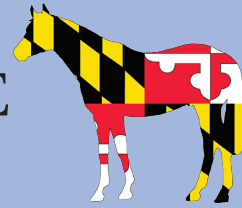
We urge the Committee to give SB 603 an unfavorable report.

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

⁸ http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018-2020_ProposedSeasons.pdf See also https://www.heraldmailmedia.com/news/local/hunters-oppose-md-and-w-va-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

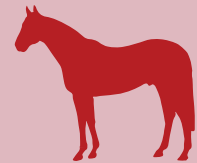


88,000 equine acres preserved forever as farmland



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

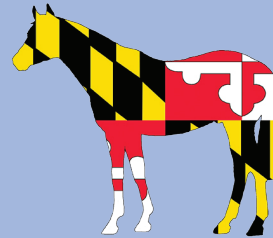


MD is home to International gems:

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

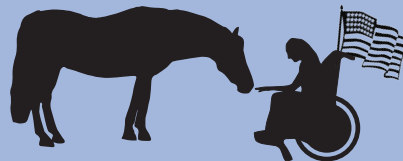
Recreation Sector Total Economic Impact of:
\$382 million



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

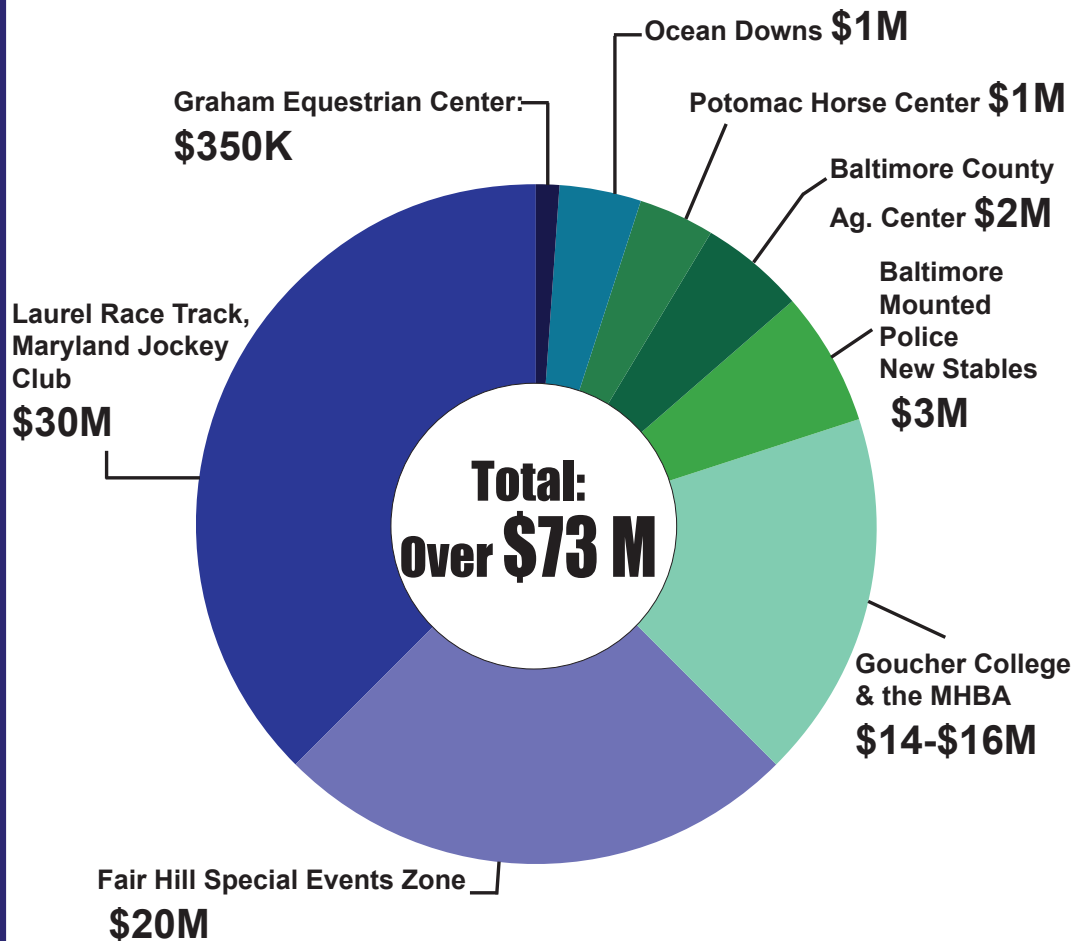
The American Horse Council Foundation 2017

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

