



7338 Baltimore Ave
Suite 102
College Park, MD 20740

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 615 – “Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting - Prince George's County PG 402-21”

Position: Oppose

Hearing Date: February 26, 2021

The Maryland Sierra Club submits this testimony in opposition to HB615. On behalf of our membership in Prince George’s County, we oppose Sunday deer hunting in Prince George’s County in the interest of safety for other park users.

We recognize the importance of deer management and the necessity for hunting to limit the damage that uncontrolled deer populations can inflict on our native plant communities, and also recognize the role of deer in vector-borne human disease. We appreciate the work of the Department of Natural Resources in allowing and regulating hunting to nurture the biodiversity in our natural places. However, fairness requires that our public lands be accessible to all, even during hunting season.

Especially at this time when indoor social activities and even church services must be curtailed to decrease the spread of COVID-19, people need to be able to use trails on public lands for the physical and mental health benefits that come with exercise in green spaces. Allowing hunting on Sundays when parks are full of people does not seem safe. The complexity of the hunting season calendar makes it difficult to know whether on any given day there might be hunters aiming at things that move. Knowing that there is no hunting on Sunday makes it easier for park users – carrying our cameras, binoculars, and walking sticks – to share in the goodness that our forests provide. If more deer need to be culled, perhaps more hunters can be encouraged to use the other days when hunting is allowed.

We ask that at least one day a week be reserved for non-hunters to safely enjoy a walk in the woods, and accordingly ask that you report this bill unfavorably.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.