



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

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Kumar 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 – House Bill 1163 – Caroline County – Sunday Hunting – Deer Hunting Seasons

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports House Bill 1163. 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 HB 1163 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 HB 1163 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKittrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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