



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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February 10, 2021

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 594 - Prohibition on Sale of Wildlife - Local Venison Donation Programs - Application**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 594, legislation that establishes that the prohibition against selling, offering for sale, bartering, or exchanging deer taken from the wild does not apply to venison from a lawfully harvested white-tailed deer that is donated to a venison donation program, administered by the county in which the deer was harvested, for processing and distribution to a food bank.

Deer cause on average \$50/acre of crop damage to Maryland crops. The farmer receives no repayment for this economic loss. A farmer can harvest deer under a deer management permit but has to foot the cost to have the deer processed and is required to either keep the meat to donate it to a food bank. This bill does two things. It allows a farmer or hunter that ability to re-coop the cost of harvesting and processing a deer that they donate to a food bank. Secondly, it helps provide a high quality, lean protein source for food banks around the state.

**MDFB Policy:** The following action will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate enactment; The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. and A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation non-profit under a crop damage permit.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 594 AND ENCOURAGE A FAVORABLE REPORT**

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Director of Government Relations

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