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HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
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HOUSE BILL 1134
Natural Resources – Fishing and Hunting Rights
SUPPORT

Of timely relevance to the debate on HB 1134 is the Sunday, February 7, 2021 COMMENTARY appearing in the Capital Gazette entitled, ‘**LOVE WATERFOWL? THANK A HUNTER FOR SAVING THEM.**

<https://www.capitalgazette.com/environment/ac-cn-column-gerald-winegrad-2021207-20210206-hj23k4rxurbwfoulz7ken2v3ni-story.html>

THE HONORABLE KUMAR P. BARVE, CHAIR
HONORABLE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Hunters of Maryland commend Delegate Carey for his introduction of HB 1134 which duly recognizes the legacy, tradition and heritage of fishing/hunting in Maryland. From the hills and streams of Western Maryland to the Susquehanna Flats and the Atlantic Ocean, Maryland is renowned for some of the best fishing and hunting anywhere. Ocean City is known as the “White Marlin Capital of the World” while Havre de Grace is known as the “Decoy Capital of the World” and the Eastern Shore is known as the “Goose Hunting Capital of the World.” No other state can boast the same.

According to the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, the economics of fishing and hunting in Maryland reveal that about 445,000 hunters and anglers annually spend about \$815 million.

http://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/2019_Maryland_ASCF_Sheet.pdf
<http://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/Maryland-Factsheet.pdf>

From a hunting perspective, few understand what it is like to be afield. It’s not the harvesting per se, but the experience of being one with nature, ideally in the harshest of weather conditions. Hunters, not taxpayers, underwrite close to 100% of the State’s cost for managing wildlife consistent with the American System of Conservation Funding, aka “user fee based” via hunting license/stamp/equipment sales. Notably, it has been over 30 years since Maryland last approved a regular hunting license fee increase. Moreover, one need only view legislation over the last decade plus to see that it has been the hunters of Maryland who have advanced legislation to punish poachers, strengthen conservation law enforcement oversight and pursue alternative public funding support for fisheries and wildlife management/research, aka Public Trust Doctrine.

Enactment of House Bill 1134 will send a message to the citizenry, et al, that hunting and fishing in Maryland are noble pursuits worthy of public appreciation, recognition and support.

Bill Miles
Advocate, Hunters of Maryland