



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

February 26, 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 – House Bill 1134 – Natural Resources – Fishing and Hunting Rights

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports House Bill 1134. This bill would establish the intent of the General Assembly that residents of Maryland have a right to fish and hunt.

The department shares the belief with the bill's sponsor that fishing and hunting are a valuable part of the State's cultural and social heritage that provides enormous environmental and recreational benefits. These benefits were on full display as Maryland's citizens have flocked to outdoor recreation at record rates at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as a means to weather the storm, both mentally and physically. Continuing to value and support fishing and hunting together with other outdoor activities and conservation is critical for Maryland's ongoing recovery.

It is also true that hunting and fishing greatly support the state's economy, as acknowledged in HB 1134. The most recent National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation estimated that anglers and hunters in Maryland spent nearly \$800 million. Recreational fishing accounted for an estimated \$535 million, while hunting accounted for \$264 million. Much of these expenditures were on food, lodging, equipment and transportation.

Fishing and hunting play not only an important part in Maryland's economy, but in funding the success of DNR's mission. Revenues generated by the sale of these fishing and hunting licenses directly supports the department's fish and wildlife conservation and protection efforts. In addition, a portion of every dollar spent by hunters on sporting arms returns to the State as dedicated federal funding for the restoration and improvement of wildlife habitat.

For the above reasons, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant HB 1134 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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