



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 840 – Somerset County – Natural Resources – Sunday Hunting

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources offers its support for House Bill 840. This bill would allow Sunday hunting for deer, other game mammals, and game bird species in Somerset County throughout their respective seasons. Currently, Somerset County is authorized for Sunday deer hunting during the firearm season, four 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.

There are a number of public lands in Somerset County, most of those existing tracts are remote undeveloped state forests and wildlife management areas. The one exception is Janes Island State Park. This Park would not be open to Sunday hunting as existing law prohibits opening lands managed by the Maryland Park Service.

For the above reasons, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant HB 840 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Service

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