



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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March 9, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support with amendment - SB 582 - Natural Resources - Recreation on Private Land - Hunting**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support with amendment of SB 582, legislation that, if amended, provides that if a landowner directly invites or permits with or without charge an individual to use the landowner's real property for hunting, the invited or permitted individual impliedly consents to adhere to every law, observe every safety precaution and practice, take every precaution against fire, and assume all responsibility and liability for the individual's safety and property while hunting on the landowner's real property.

During a recent court case that involved a landowner that had allowed some people to ride ATVs in his property, the judge ruled in favor of the ATV rider that wrecked on this person's property and said that since the landowner had not made his land available to all public, then the landowner did not meet the standards to be exempted based on 5-1106 of the Natural Resources Article. Even though that court case was not a hunting accident, the same statute also includes the hunting liability exemption.

Because of this ruling, this bill is being introduced to clarify the intent of the law, when it comes to allowing people to hunt on private land when invited. This bill addresses the liability exemption from non-willful or non-malicious liability for hunting only.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock and landowners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's responsible actions.

MDFB requests an amendment to this bill to also allow landowners that lease out their hunting rights to hunting groups to also be included in this liability exemption. This amendment would conform SB 582 to HB 956.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT SB 582 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT

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