

**HB 874\_mgoldstein\_fav 2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mathew Goldstein

Position: FAV



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March 15, 2022

**HB 874 - SUPPORT**

Prince George's County – Natural Resources – Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery  
Hunting Safety Zones

Dear Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation  
Committee,

Maryland bans, or otherwise limits, the sale of automobiles and other vehicles (Business Regulation Code Ann. §18–101), and the sale of alcohol (Alcoholic Beverages Code Ann. §11–102), on Sundays. Financial institutions must be closed on Sunday (Financial Institutions Code Ann. §5–704). Maryland is one of eleven states where hunting is still banned or otherwise restricted on Sunday (Natural Resources Code Ann. §10-410). Counties (and Baltimore) have requested, and usually obtained, a variety of exemptions from some of these Sunday activity restrictions from the General Assembly. Secular Maryland supports these requests to reduce or eliminate Sunday activity restrictions. We disagree with the state level Sunday activity restrictions.

Sunday is a special day of the week for many Christians. For other citizens the day of rest and worship may be Friday or Saturday, and for some citizens there is no god to worship or no fixed day of rest each week. Maryland law can be, and should be, more accommodating to this diversity of belief among its citizens. Legally banning business and leisure activity on Sundays favors a majority religious practice. Favoring a majority religious practice is not a proper goal of the laws. To the fullest extent feasible, our laws should accommodate minority religious practices along with non-religious and anti-religion beliefs.

The decisions regarding which day to hunt, to buy or sell alcohol, to buy or sell vehicles, to initiate and process financial transactions, etc., are best left to the citizens. State lawmakers can require one day off every week without specifying a particular day of the week by delegating that decision to the affected businesses. Hunting restrictions to accommodate horseback riding, hiking, and the like during the hunting season can be defined for particular hours throughout the week or rotated to different days for each week of the month instead of being on every Sunday.

Respectfully,  
Mathew Goldstein  
3838 Early Glow Ln  
Bowie, MD

**HB874 (SB23) PG Sunday hunting.pdf**

Uploaded by: Barbara Sollner-Webb

Position: UNF

Hello! I am Barbara Sollner-Webb, a decades-long Prince George's county resident and a long-time member of the Executive Board of Trail Riders of Today, a 40-plus year old group of equestrians that has numbered over 1000 in some years. Today I am testifying both for myself as a county resident and for TROT. Equestrians, like hikers, birders, bicyclists and many others enjoy getting out on Maryland's gorgeous trails and appreciating the state's beauty -- but it is hard when fearing being shot by an errant bullet or arrow. TROT has taken numerous membership surveys over the years with members invariably impressed and united in wanting to retain that one day each week to safely ride without fear of being shot at. The other six days per week hunting is already permitted in most locations (except immediately abutting residences).

I personally have been shot at three times while out riding my horse, always when riding on land where hunting was not permitted, with the bullet or arrow fired from neighboring land where hunting was permitted, presumably by some hunter who mistook my white riding helmet or horse for a 5-point buck. It most definitely is not fun to be shot at – actually, a very scary experience.

Indeed, my colleague, Delegate Ben Barnes recounted to me his getting shot at when out hiking in an area park, again the lethal projectile fired from abutting land, and he said he did not enjoy the experience one bit either.

Notably, bullets and arrows do not respect property boundaries.

Prince George's is one of a few jurisdictions that traditionally had maintained safe Sundays – the one day we can enjoy the trails without fear of being shot at. Please don't take that one day away, over many months each year, when the hunters already have all six other days.

A few days ago in the hearing on HB1279 you heard very eloquent and well-researched testimony from outdoor enthusiasts who do not want the one safe day per week taken away for the benefit of the less than 2% of the population who are hunters, which I highly endorse.

You also heard Delegate Healey's most excellent suggestion that if hunters want Sundays, they should give us other 98% of the population back Saturdays to safely enjoy the outdoors as a hunt-free day.

Please, decline HB874.

**hunting accident report 2007-2021.pages.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: UNF

# Excerpts from 15 years of DNR's Annual Hunting Accident Reports

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/pages/hunting-incident-reports.aspx>

## 2021

— A 58-year old Washington County Deer Hunter (Firearms Season) was actively hunting in a wooded area when they were struck in the thigh with a round from another firearm. NRP investigation revealed that the victim was shot in the thigh by a 10-year old relative in their hunting party who had mistaken the victim for game. Victim was transported to the hospital for non-life threatening injuries. No charges were filed against the shooter.

## 2020

--- A Frederick County resident observed damage to the exterior of their residence, which was consistent with that of pellet strikes from a shotgun. While investigating officers located no hunting activity in the area, the incident did occur during the end of spring turkey season. No further suspect / hunter information was developed throughout the investigation.

— A Kent County resident observed damage to their vehicle's windshield, which was consistent with that of pellet strikes from a shotgun. Nearby waterfowl hunters were interviewed and denied any involvement, which was confirmed through an on-scene investigation. The area in question is known for waterfowl hunting and there were reports of numerous shots leading up to the incident. No further suspect / hunter information was developed throughout the investigation.

— A Kent County waterfowl hunter, returning from a hunt, observed damage to their parked vehicle's tailgate, which consisted of a rifle round lodged into the plastic molding of said tailgate. Nearby waterfowl hunters were interviewed and denied any involvement, which was confirmed through an on-scene investigation. The area in question is known for waterfowl hunting. No further suspect / hunter information was developed throughout the investigation.

— A 17 year-old Wicomico County Waterfowl Hunter was underway in a vessel with other hunters when they were struck with shotgun pellets. Investigation revealed that other members of the victim's hunting party were on shore and approximately 50-60 yards away when a 20 year-old fired a shot towards the victim's vessel in an alleged attempt to scare him and his hunting party. The victim sustained non-life threatening injuries. Natural resources / criminal charges were filed against the shooter in this incident.

— A 14 year-old Somerset County Turkey Hunter (Firearms - Junior Hunt Days) was on foot and stalking turkeys with other juvenile hunters and under adult supervision. As the juveniles were walking 50-70 yards apart, under thick tree cover and out of sight from one another, a 14-year old shooter observed a turkey and fired their shotgun twice at said game. As a result, shotgun pellets ultimately struck the victim. The shooter was not aware that the victim was in the background. The victim sustained non-life threatening injuries.

## 2019

---- A 61-year-old Washington County Woodchuck Hunter was shooting from the front of their residence off a picnic table for support when one shot went errant and struck a person fishing at an adjacent pond, grazing

their shoulder. The victim was approximately two tenths of a mile away obscured by heavy brush and tree cover. Rimfire .22 long rifle ammunition from a rifle was the implement used.

--- An unknown Washington County Deer Hunter (Archery season) shot a crossbow bolt through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victims driveway. Apparently the shot took place after sunset the evening before the damage was observed. Deer frequent the lawn of this residence and other residences within the neighborhood most evenings. No suspect(s) were observed at the time of the damage.

---- A Montgomery County residence received a broken window caused by a stray bullet fired from a rifle. The projectile was recovered on scene lodged in between two plates of glass. No suspects at the time of the shooting but several shots were reported just before the window received damage.

## 2018

No relevant reports

## 2017

--- A 26 year old Talbot County deer hunter (firearms season) shot at two deer with 12 gauge shotgun slugs. The first deer was struck and ran 40 yards before collapsing, the second deer was shot at but the first slug went over its back, the second shot dropped the deer in the location where it was standing. Apparently the slug that missed struck an occupied residence just to one side of the front door. Upon a 911 call a sheriff's department deputy had searched and located the lone hunter. After an investigation by NRP the hunter was charged with negligent hunting and discharging a firearm within the safety zone. Property damage only

--- An unknown Carroll County deer hunter (firearms season) sent a 7mm projectile through the side of a residence, through the bedroom wall, through a wooden dresser, then through a closet wall before coming to rest in a pile of towels in the closet. Two people were in the bedroom at the time but neither was injured. A search of nearby farms was unsuccessful in locating any hunter(s). Property damage only

--- A 52 year old Cecil County deer hunter (late firearms season) took two shots at a deer with a 30/30 rifle toward the direction of a neighboring farm. One of the shots (both of which missed the deer) struck a dining room window of the adjacent residence and stopped, being found on the windowsill. During the investigation it was determined that the round that struck the window had ricocheted off of the ground. The distance from the shooter to the house was 398 yards.

(DNR's on-line annual report for 2017 is identical to DNR'S 2016's report – the 2016 appears to be missing)

## 2015

--- A 16 year old Allegany County turkey hunter fired two (2) shots from a 12 gauge shotgun at what they believed to be the white head of a spring gobbler. The shot traveled approximately 53 yards and struck a 70 year old camouflaged turkey hunter in the face. This hunter had walked into the woods, sat down and was listening for turkey's completely camouflaged except for the side of his face which is what the shooter was observing and mistook for a turkey. Non-Fatal

## 2014



--- A 50 year old Carroll County Fox Hunter sent a 6mm rifle round through a patio glass door. The round went through a vinyl garden hose and a plastic lawn chair before going through the door and striking a kitchen chair. The homeowner was the only occupant in the residence at the time and they were in bed sleeping.

--- A 52 year old Kent County Turkey Hunter (Spring Season) took two shots at a gobbler out in an open field. The second shot was at the bird while in flight. One pellet struck the storm door of an adjacent house causing the glass to shatter. The homeowner was present in the home at the time.

## 2013

--- A 47 year old Calvert County rabbit hunter received a gunshot (shotgun) wound to his body/thigh/head when he was shot by a 15 year old hunting partner. A party of 4 was hunting with the aid of a dog when a rabbit ran between the men who were approximately 40 yards apart. The shooter stated that he could not see the other hunter when he shot at the rabbit

--- A 52 year old Charles County deer hunter shot his 22 year old son with a rifle across an open field. The shooter and the victim had been hunting together and at dusk the shooter fired out at movement in the field which he mistook for a deer. was walking through the field prior to ending the hunt and returning to the vehicles.

--- A 28 year old Charles County deer hunter while hunting within the safety zone ---discharged his shotgun resulting in the rifled slug passing through a window of the residence striking a chandelier in the dining room and becoming embedded in a wall. Thankfully the residence was vacant at the time of the incident.

--- A rifle round was recovered from a Frederick County home during the second day of the extended fire arms deer season. The round went through the wall of the home and struck a sliding glass door causing it to shatter. The round was recovered at the scene by the sheriff's department. The nearest wooded area was over 400 yards away. Property Damage Only

--- A rifle round was recovered from a "second" Frederick County home during the extended firearms deer season. The round entered through the front wall of the residence blew out the drywall in the living room at which time the bullet came to rest on the floor and was recovered by the homeowner. The bullet was a full metal jacket round (illegal to use on big game)

## 2012

--- A 62 year old Harford County landowner was struck by a random shot on their property. Upon investigation it was determined the landowner had been hearing a volley of shots repeatedly behind her home. As she and her husband went outside to investigate, a piece of shot struck her in the left forearm. Law enforcement responded and never found hunters in the area. The landowners advised no one had permission to be there, therefore trespassers were suspected to be the shooters. No suspects were located nor arrests made. The victim suffered a very minor wound to her forearm. Non Fatal.

--- A home in Dorchester County was struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the homeowner heard shots and found a French door in the back of their home was shattered due a projectile striking the lower left hand pane. The area behind the home is a public hunting area. No suspects were ever located. It was also never determined hunters caused this situation.

## 2011

--- A 41 year old Carroll County woman was struck in the right leg by a stray projectile while she was in her back yard. Upon investigation it was determined two individuals were plinking and shooting at squirrels & birds with a .22 cal. rifle in a wooded area behind her residence. Due to an unsafe backstop, it was determined their projectile traveled approximately .26 miles to the victim's property causing the leg injury. Squirrel season was closed at the time of this incident. Charges pending. Non fatal.

--- A 57 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 57 year old hunting companion who he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter and victim had split up to hunt deer. Both hunters were wearing fluorescent orange when they departed each others company. The shooter had gone approximately 95 yards to his stand, climbed into it and began to hunt deer. The shooter observed a dark movement coming towards his location. The shooter was using a .30-06 scoped rifle. The shooter advised he determined he was shooting at a deer by looking through his scope, and shot at center mass.

--- A 48 year old Caroline County deer hunter shot his 46 year old hunting companion that he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter heard a disturbance of brush and saw movement, thinking it was a deer. The shooter fired a crossbow bolt at the movement at a distance of 62 yards, striking the victim in his left tibia. The time of the incident was four minutes after legal shooting hours. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting. Non Fatal.

--- A 16 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 19 year old hunting companion while shooting at a running deer: Upon investigation 8 hunters had organized a deer drive in a marshy dense wooded area. 5 hunters were pushing deer while 3 were standers. As a deer passed between two standers, the shooter shot at a running deer, striking his hunting companion in both femurs with a .12 ga. shotgun using #4 buckshot at a distance of 60 yards. The shooter advised he never saw the victim. Both hunters were wearing daylight fluorescent orange. Non Fatal.

--- A 56 year old Dorchester County turkey hunter shot his 36 year old hunting companion, mistaking him for game: Upon investigation it was determined the two hunters entered their hunting area and posted three turkey decoys in an open field. They then split up to hunt the area and the shooter advised he did not see which direction the victim went. After a period of time the shooter saw three turkeys to the right of the decoys 40 yards away. The shooter advised he could not see the birds at all times. After an hour he called his companion on a cell phone to ask him if he saw the birds. Immediately after their conversation, the shooter saw a movement then shot. He had shot his hunting companion. The movement he saw was the victim putting his cell phone away. The victim was shot at a distance of 38 yards. The victim received 24 #4 shotgun pellets which were fired from the shooters 12 .ga shotgun. The victim was struck in the right side of his body receiving wounds in his head, neck, shoulder, torso, calf, knee, and ankle. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting. Non Fatal.

--- A 13 year old Dorchester County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter discharged a .45 cal. muzzleloader at a deer 6 minutes after legal shooting hours. The projectile, missing the deer, traveled 242 yards striking a house 48 inches from the ground. As the projectile entered the house, it penetrated exterior and interior walls and lodged in a recliner. A resident in the home was sitting in the chair at the time and received a redmark on their shoulder where the projectile stopped on impact. Non Fatal

## 2010

--- During the 2010 Firearm Deer Season, residents of a home located in the area of Walkersville (Frederick County), reported their house had been struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the home had been struck by a projectile doing damage to the exterior & interior walls. Interviews were conducted with seven hunters who were in the vicinity of the area the day before hunting deer as regarding their actions that

day. It was never determined who may have been the shooter, but one scenario did reveal a hunter had fired a .30.30 rifle at a deer pointed in the direction that the home approximately 3,940 feet away. No evidence was found to support charges. Non Fatal.

--- A 45 year old Frederick County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter had discharged a .12 gauge shotgun using slugs at a herd of deer. The gun jammed, the shooter cleared the gun, turned and shot at another deer in the direction of the home. The shooter advised he had become disoriented as to the direction he was shooting. The slug entered the home at a distance of 114 yards, traveled through the exterior and two interior walls, through two rooms, and into appliances and home furnishings. No one was in the home at the time of the incident. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting and Hunting within 150 yards of a dwelling (Safety Zone). Non Fatal.

--- A 53 year old Howard County deer hunter was shot by his 36 year old hunting companion. The shooter shot at a standing deer with a .12 gauge slug in an open field at approximately 243 yards. The bullet missed the deer, striking the victim sitting in a wooden ground blind at the opposite end of the field. The victim received injuries to his right arm and hand. Non Fatal. Charges pending an investigation

--- A 46 year old Queen Anne's County deer hunting was shot by his 25 year old hunting companion. With both subjects participating in a deer drive, the shooter shot at a running deer twice with a .20 gauge shotgun slug. A slug traveled 70 yards, striking the victim positioned at the opposite end of the field in the left leg. Non Fatal. Negligent Hunting charges pending.

--- A 55 year old Dorchester County rabbit hunter was shot by his 55 year old hunting companion. The shooter shot at a running rabbit with a .20 gauge shotgun in a thicket. The shot pellets traveled approximately 30 to 40 feet through the thicket striking the victim. The victim received injuries to the right side of his head, neck, eye, arm and left

--- A Frederick County garage window was struck by a bullet from an unknown source. An investigation could not recover the projectile nor related evidence. This incident occurred during the firearm's deer season.

## 2009

--- A 57 year-old goose hunter in Kent County was shot by another hunter while attempting to retrieve a wounded goose. The victim received a minor wound to the face from a shotgun pellet which deflected off the water striking the victim.

--- A window was broken at an occupied daycare facility from a slug fired by a shotgun in Howard County. Several hunters were found in the area and interviewed by several police agencies. Negligent hunting charges were filed, but the States Attorney elected not to prosecute due to insufficient evidence.

--- A window in a house was struck and broken by a sabot round fired by a deer hunter in Talbot County. The investigation found that in this case, the hunter was not negligent and charges were not filed.

--- While checking vacant buildings, several Frederick County Sheriff Deputy vehicles were struck by shot gun pellets causing minor damage. Several individuals who were hunting quail in the area were located and charges were filed by the States Attorney's office for Reckless Endangerment.

--- A 69 year-old deer hunter in Dorchester County found himself in the middle of a deer drive on a wildlife refuge. After hearing several shots the hunter realized that his shotgun had been struck on the barrel and magazine by lead shot. The shooter was never found or located.

## 2008

— A 47 year-old Allegany County deer hunter, walking into the woods without hunter orange, was shot by a 32 year-old hunter. The shooter heard noise, saw movement through the trees and shot the victim without identifying the target. Fatal.

— A 40 year-old Talbot County goose hunter was shot by his hunting partner when the shooter, from outside the blind, shot at a wounded goose. The victim in the blind was in the line of fire. One pellet entered his eye and lodged in his brain. Non-fatal.

— A 64 year-old Garrett County deer hunter was shot in the abdomen by another hunter who mistook the victim for a deer. Shooter was charged with negligent hunting. Non-fatal.

## 2007

— A 51 year-old Caroline County quail hunter shot his hunting partner when a quail flew between them. The victim received 4 pellets to his upper body.

— A 54 year-old Talbot County deer hunter was shot by his hunting partner when a deer ran between them and the shooter shot at the deer. The shooter hit the deer and shrapnel from the slug hit the victim in the hand causing minor injuries.

— A 59 year-old Queen Anne's County deer hunter was shot by his hunting partner when a deer ran between them. The victim was below field level, climbing a hill out of site of the shooter. He received neck injuries.

— A 38 year-old Garrett County deer hunter was shot in the shoulder by his 16 year-old hunting partner when the victim was moving through bushes and mistaken for game. Victim was not wearing fluorescent orange.

— A 64 year-old Charles County Turkey hunter was shot by his hunting partner when the victim started to retrieve a turkey and was mistaken for another turkey by the shooter. Victim received 4 pellet wounds to various parts of the body.

## INCIDENTS -- NOT REPORTED IN DNR ACCIDENT REPORTS (2016 to present)– that were recorded in other news sources:

### **--- MD: Woman attempting to shoot groundhog accidentally hits man fishing at park**

May 28, 2019

The Maryland Natural Resource Police are investigating an incident of a bullet that grazed a man in the shoulder on Sunday afternoon.

According to police, a 61-year-old woman was shooting a groundhog in her backyard, which borders the Smithsburg Lions Community Park.

The woman missed and the bullet ricocheted across the water and struck a 28-year-old man who was fishing.

Officials said there doesn't seem to be any issues with limitation, however the shooter is responsible for anything in background, like in this case, the park....

--- **Fatality** : Maryland Natural Resources police were investigating a fatal hunting accident in Frederick County on Saturday, the opening day of deer season for firearms. Police said the rifle of a first-time hunter from Altadena, Calif., was accidentally discharged while he was deer hunting on private property on Eylers Valley Flint Road near Thurmont. Police identified the victim as Vincent Cavallo, 32.

Cavallo and his uncle were hunting in separate areas of the property when the uncle heard a gunshot. He went to check on his nephew and found him dead, DNR police spokeswoman Candy Thomson said. Police were called to the scene at 9:24 a.m.

Police said the victim is believed to have slipped or dropped the gun and it discharged, hitting him in the head. His body was taken to the medical examiner's office. Natural Resources police were assisted by the Frederick County Sheriff's Department in the investigation.

[lorraine.mirabella@baltsun.com](mailto:lorraine.mirabella@baltsun.com)

--- Author: Scott Broom

Published: 6:07 PM EDT October 24, 2016

The mystery is still not solved after an 87-year old man was apparently struck (ed. note: in the head) by a shotgun pellet or bullet fragment while walking on his property in rural Montgomery County Saturday. Authorities suspect a hunting accident, but they don't know who fired the shot or from where. Residents and hunters say they are deeply concerned by the incident. The victim's property is on the boundary of the Patuxent River State Park where hunting with firearms is permitted. Hunters may not fire guns within 150 yards of an occupied dwelling without a residents' permission, even if the hunter is on another property or public land nearby. Maryland averages 2-3 hunting accidents involving firearms annually. The victim is almost always a hunter.

NOTE: see more of this episode at:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/man-87-in-marylands-montgomery-county-struck-by-a-small-metallic-projectile/2016/10/22/bc0e5974-98c8-11e6-bc79-af1cd3d2984b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/man-87-in-marylands-montgomery-county-struck-by-a-small-metallic-projectile/2016/10/22/bc0e5974-98c8-11e6-bc79-af1cd3d2984b_story.html)

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.wusa9.com/amp/article/news/local/mystery-surrounds-shooting-of-elderly-md-man-walking-home/65-340868641>

--- **Fatality**: Oct 11, 2015 - WASHINGTON — A 75-year-old huntsman was fatally *shot during* a hunting trip Saturday in Queen Anne's County, ... *Marvin Bowen Coppage*, a resident of *Henderson*, was hired to lead a guided *pheasant and chukar* hunt.

--- 2014 A mountain biker was peppered by bird shot while riding his bike in the Tuckahoe State Park on Maryland's Eastern (related by Tuckahoe park staff) knowledge)

Citizen report:

Date: March 15, 2019 at 9:15:38 AM EDT

To: <mwc.dnr@maryland.gov>, <animalcontrol@howardcountymd.gov>, <hcpdcrimetips@howardcountymd.gov>

Subject: Hunting Violation in Western Howard County

Hello,

I want to report a hunting violation that I encountered yesterday afternoon between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the Woodbine parcel of the Patuxent State Park.

I was in the park on horseback and one or two people began shooting firearms near the trail head that is immediately north of the farm at 4505 Jennings Chapel Road.

I hollered several times so that they could hear that I was there and stop shooting long enough for me to get out of the park. They were shooting between me and the closest way out of the park so my way was totally blocked.

They did not stop shooting even as I hollered and eventually my very sane and experienced horse bolted to try to get away from the noise, which was echoing everywhere.

Luckily I am a strong rider and I did not have a mishap but my horse was badly frightened, as was I, frankly. It was mainly luck that we did not run into a tree or barbed wire or worse.

Once I finally got to the trail head – after picking my way along as close to the edge of the park as I possibly could on the theory they would not fire towards residences – I saw their vehicles and got their license plates. They were both Maryland vehicles, one was 5CC8856 and the other was 5C74853.

I have attached photographs of the vehicles. I also have a photograph of my riding attire yesterday, which included a safety orange saddle pad and a reflective yellow jacket, which I can provide if necessary.

I have been riding in this part of the park for over 15 years and every time I have encountered hunters we have been courteous to one another and respectful of each other's sport and mindful of each other's safety. These people were obviously an exception.

I am happy to discuss further by telephone if necessary.

# **testimony - Sunday hunting Prince Georges 2022 - H**

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: UNF





MARYLAND  
**HORSE**  
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797  
[www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)

*One Common Bond: The Horse*  
*One Common Voice: The Horse Council*

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 874 – Prince George’s County -  
Natural Resources – Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones: OPPOSE

- ❖ **A majority of Marylanders oppose Sunday hunting.** An independent statewide poll conducted by Gonzales Research and Media Services in 2018 found that 68.9% of respondents oppose Sunday hunting. Even DNR’s own 2018 commissioned survey found that a majority of the general population does not favor Sunday hunting and does not want to see it expanded.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ **This bill would allow Sunday hunting in Prince George’s for the first time ever, on every Sunday October, November, December and half of January.**
- ❖ **This bill would infringe on the rights of the general public to enjoy outdoor recreation, the importance of which has received increased attention, including the State Park Investment Commission, a new Office of Outdoor Recreation in DNR, and the introduction of SB 541, the Great Maryland Outdoors Act. 78% of the Gonzales poll respondents said they would decide to alter their recreational plans to avoid hunters. In a Maryland Horse Council 2016 poll, 85% of respondents said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters.**
- ❖ **Since the advent of the pandemic, widespread use of outdoor recreation and natural resources by the general public has only increased.** For example, attendance at Maryland State Parks in 2020 increased 45% over 2019, which was also a record year.<sup>2</sup> Demand remained strong through 2021. **Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, including the distinctions between private and public lands. Now is not the time to increase general public exposure to possible hunting risks, or to further deter the public from outdoor recreation. We have separately submitted with this testimony a report of hunting incidents from 2007 - 2021, compiled from DNR’s own data.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018\\_DeerPublicOpinionSurvey.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018_DeerPublicOpinionSurvey.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2021/02/04/lt-governor-boyd-k-rutherford-maryland-department-of-natural-resources-announce-45-percent-increase-in-maryland-state-parks-attendance-in-2020/>



- ❖ **The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), has recently begun to conclude that the deer population in Maryland has stabilized, and additional deer reduction measures are not needed and even contraindicated.** The deer population in Maryland has declined from a high of almost 300,000 in 2002 to just over 200,000. DNR has reduced bag limits (i.e., the number of deer allowed to be taken), implicitly acknowledging that reducing the deer population is not a priority. **In a February 2022 press release, DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Paul Peditto stated “the deer population is trending toward a population level that reduces damage to agriculture and minimizes impacts on our natural communities.”** Nevertheless, according to DNR’s recent survey, hunters want to see the deer population maintained or increased.
  
- ❖ **We agree that deer can present health, public safety and economic problems in Maryland. However, Sunday hunting is demonstrably not an effective solution to that problem. For example, in all but one of the five Maryland counties that vastly expanded Sunday hunting, the deer harvest has fallen. (See footnote 6)**
  
- ❖ Therefore, **Sunday hunting is not an effective deer management tool; it is rather a hunter convenience tool.** Convenience is surely a benefit, but it is a benefit that should be available to all constituents equitably, not just one small segment. The number of licensed hunters in Maryland, about 100,000, is less than 2% of the state’s population of about 6 million.
  
- ❖ **The Maryland horse industry represents \$2.1 billion in economic impact; 28,000 jobs; \$1 billion in annual spending by participants; \$78 million in tax revenue. Over \$73 million in infrastructure improvements to public and private facilities around the state. There are over 100,000 horses in Maryland (more per square mile than any state in the Union), and 51.8% of Maryland households contain horse enthusiasts.<sup>3</sup> There are horses in every county in the state.<sup>4</sup> The majority of Maryland riders are trail riders.<sup>5</sup>**

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes breed, interest and discipline associations, plus horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses and race tracks, to the owners of international level competition horses, local sport horses, trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. The owner of Pimlico, Laurel and Rosecroft racetracks is a member, as are vets, tack stores, and other farms, businesses and enthusiasts throughout the state. As such, we stand for over 30,000 Marylanders. Every Maryland county, without exception, is home to hundreds to thousands of horses. (See footnote 4) There are

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<sup>3</sup> See attached fact sheet.

<sup>4</sup> According to the 2010 Maryland Equine Census (current numbers are likely about 25% higher, based on current total statewide population): Allegany 350; Baltimore 8950; Carroll 6050; Frederick 7850; Garrett 1500; Harford 6200; Howard 4350; Montgomery 7900; Washington 3750; Anne Arundel 4500; Calvert 1350; Charles 1750; Prince George’s 7100; Saint Mary’s 2300; Caroline 1300; Cecil 6200; Kent 1200; Queen Anne’s 1700; Talbot 1500; Dorchester 350; Somerset 270; Wicomico 1800; Worcester 880

<sup>5</sup> <http://equiery.com/trail-riding-tops-reader-survey/>

more horse per square mile in Maryland than in any state in the Union. (See attached fact sheet.)

The horse industry in Maryland is a large, engaged and thriving constituency, and a strong economic engine: 28,000 direct equine related jobs; 16,000 properties occupying over 705,000 acres (almost 10% of Maryland's total land area, and over 25% of Maryland's agricultural land) The industry represents \$2.1 billion in annual economic impact, generating \$78 million in annual tax revenue. Horse industry participants spend \$1 billion dollars annually (compare that to the \$260 million annual figure for hunters cited in the Fiscal and Policy Note).. Thus, legislative actions that affect the equine industry have a broad economic effect.

#### POSITION

The Horse Council opposes HB 874.

#### BACKGROUND

For over 20 years, the Maryland Horse Council has worked to ensure fair use of shared natural resources during hunting seasons, by seeking to preserve Sundays as the one day of the week when children and adults who are hikers, birdwatchers, dog walkers, trail riders and other outdoor enthusiasts could enjoy the outdoors without concern for adverse interactions with hunters. Almost 20 years ago, we helped defeat a number of statewide Sunday hunting bills. Proponents of Sunday hunting then changed tactics, seeking to introduce Sunday hunting on a county-by-county basis, which we also opposed vigorously. Sometimes they were successful; sometimes not. When they were successful, they succeeded in making an already complicated situation more complicated, making it more difficult for others to plan their outings, and for Natural Resources Police to effectively crack down on poachers and irresponsible hunters, which has caused even more negative encounters between irresponsible hunters and other users.<sup>6</sup>

The Maryland Horse Council has proposed reasonable compromises that would still allow fair use of shared natural resources, by cutting off Sunday hunting, where allowed, at 10:30 am. This compromise still gives hunters, trail riders and others plenty of Sunday access to opportunities. This compromise has been embraced by some legislators, who have praised the Horse Council for this reasonable approach, and it has been adopted by Montgomery, Kent and Wicomico Counties. Now we are facing a bill that would allow all day Sunday hunting in Prince George's County for the first time ever. This bill does nothing to improve the situation for Natural Resources Police and continues to infringe on the fair rights of other users of our shared natural resources in Maryland.

The issue of recreational Sunday hunting is certainly a fraught one. In a November 2018 independent Gonzales statewide poll, the vast majority of respondents opposed Sunday hunting:

**SUNDAY HUNTING** Oppose 68.9%; Favor 21.9%

Breakdown:

Strongly Favor 13.5%

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<sup>6</sup> In a 2016 Maryland Horse Council survey, 35% of respondents reported "adverse incidents" with hunters while trail riding, ranging from rudeness to deliberate attempts to spook horses, threatening with firearms, and firing of "warning" shots. Significant percentages of DNR's survey respondents also reported problems when encountering hunters.

Somewhat Favor 8.4%  
Somewhat Oppose 15.4%  
Strongly Oppose 53.5%

These majorities opposed to Sunday hunting are true in Baltimore Metro, Washington Metro AND Rural areas. Rural Maryland opposed Sunday hunting 60.5% vs 34.1% in favor. Even DNR's own commissioned survey found that a majority of the general population does not favor Sunday hunting and does not want to see it expanded. (See footnote 1.) This bill directly contravenes that clear public opinion.

It is important to make clear that the Horse Council is not opposed to hunting. Many of our members are hunters of deer, other game mammals and game birds. We just want to ensure that everyone has a safe option for enjoyment of the outdoors, especially in this time of COVID. The COVID pandemic has dramatically increased the level of outdoor activity and use of natural resources. According to DNR, 2020 State Park attendance increased by 45% to 21.5 million visitors. 2021 demand remained strong. ***Lt. Governor Rutherford stated: "With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic changing the way we live, work, and play, more and more Marylanders are finding affordable, socially-distant, and family-friendly recreation opportunities at our parks and public lands,"*** (See footnote 2.) Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, and are unaware that they may encounter hunters in the woods. Now is not the time to roll the dice and increase the chances of potential adverse interactions between hunters and members of the public who are relatively new to the outdoors. We have separately submitted with this testimony an 8 page report, culled from DNR's own data, of hunting accidents.

Through our years of studying DNR data, we are unconvinced that recreational hunting is the best solution for managing the deer herd. These data reveal that despite expansion of Sunday hunting in some other jurisdictions, deer harvest numbers are dropping. (And given the widely acknowledged "ghost doe" problem (i.e., some hunters phone in false reports of the number of does harvested, in order to become eligible to shoot a trophy buck), those numbers may actually be artificially inflated.) We have looked at DNR harvest numbers in the five counties that have had a large number of Sunday hunting days added in recent years. In all but one of the counties, the harvest numbers declined substantially after Sundays were added.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Allegany - An increase of from 6 to 13 Sundays from 2013 to 2016. Harvest decline. **In 2013-2014, the total harvest was 3636** (with 5 Archery ("A") and 1 Firearms ("FA") Sundays); in 2014-2015, the total harvest was 3051 (5A, 3FA, 1 Junior ("J"), and 2 Muzzleloader ("M")); in 2015-2016, the total harvest 3368 (8A, 2FA, 1J, 2M). Harvest numbers continue to be depressed: 2016-2017: 2907; 2017-2018: 3361; 2018-2019: 3641; 2019-2020: 2846; 2020-2021: 3300; **2021-2022: 3014.**

Carroll - An increase of from 8 to 14 Sundays. Harvest decline. **2013-2014 - total harvest 5915** (5A, 3F, 2M); 2014-2015 - total harvest 5464 (5A, 3F, J1, M2) 2015-2016 - total harvest 5238 (8A, 3FA, 1J, 2M). Recent numbers are still below pre-Sunday increase numbers: 2016-2017: 5663; 2017-2018: 5896; 2018-2019: 5421; 2019-2020: 5523; 2020-2021: 6202; **2021-2022: 5071.**

Frederick - Increase of from 6 to 14 Sundays. Harvest decline. **2013-2014 - total harvest 8040** (5A, 1F); 2014-2015 - total harvest 7272 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 7149 (8A, 3FA, 1J, 2M).

It is sometimes argued that the declining numbers of recreational hunters is in part responsible for the declining harvest, but that begs the question of whether relying on recreational hunters is therefore “backing the wrong horse” in the effort to reduce the deer population. **Adding Sundays demonstrably does not increase the harvest; it just affords recreational hunters the luxury of choosing which weekend day to devote to hunting, thereby spreading the same number of deer kills over seven days instead of six. In the DNR survey, almost 60% of the hunters did not indicate that they would harvest more deer if Sundays were available.** So adding Sundays is arguably more a matter of hunter convenience than sound deer management. Convenience is surely a benefit, but it is a benefit that should be available to all constituents equitably, not just one small segment. The number of licensed hunters in Maryland is less than 2% of the state’s population. Compare that with the 24% who reported making frequent or occasional trips specifically to view and experience deer in their native habitat for photography or other non-hunting purposes. (See footnote 1.)

Contravening many arguments that Sunday hunting is needed to help control a burgeoning deer population is the fact that the size of the Maryland deer herd has been steadily declining from a peak of about 295,000 in 2002 to about 232,000 recently.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, DNR recently reduced the bag limits (i.e., the number of deer allowed to be taken), implicitly acknowledging that reducing the deer population is not a priority. In its proposal to reduce the bag limits, DNR stated that this change was being proposed “in response to hunter request.”<sup>9</sup> According to DNR’s recent survey, hunters want to see the deer population maintained or increased.

It is also sometimes argued that recreational hunters need Sundays because they have other things to do on Saturdays - a situation that plainly applies to most of Maryland’s families who use outdoor resources, be they hunters, birdwatchers, dog walkers, mountain bikers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and trail riders. So why should one group get special consideration? Where is the balancing of the public good, the equitable access? In the Horse Council’s statewide survey on Sunday hunting, 68% of respondents ride on trails on public or private land one or more days a week. And, perhaps most significantly, 85% said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters.

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Recent numbers are still below pre-Sunday increase numbers: 2016-2017: 7556; 2017-2018: 7354; 2018-2019: 6545; 2019-2020: 6358; 2020-2021: 7342; **2021-2022: 6088.**

Garrett - Increase of from 6 to 13 Sundays. 2013-2014 - total harvest 3868 (5A, 1F); 2014-2015 - total harvest 4453 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 4408 (8A, 2FA, 1J, 2M). 2016-2017: 4342; 2017-2018: 5349; 2018-2019: 4973; 2019-2020: 4607; 2020-2021: 4904; .2021-2022: 3923.

Washington - Increase of from 6 to 13 Sundays. Harvest decline. **2013-2014 - total harvest 6376** (5A, 1F); 2014-2015 - total harvest 5087 (5A, 3F, 1J, 2M); 2015-2016 - total harvest 5282 (8A, 2F, 1J, 2M). Harvest numbers continue to be depressed: 2016-2017: 4736; 2017-2018: 4593.; 2018-2019: 4620; 2019-2020: 4041; 2020-2021: 4712; **2021-2022: 3899.**

<sup>8</sup> <https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Maryland-Annual-Deer-Report-2020-2021.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018-2020\\_ProposedSeasons.pdf](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018-2020_ProposedSeasons.pdf) See also [https://www.heraldmailmedia.com/news/local/hunters-oppose-md-and-w-va-parks-deer-control-plan/article\\_febb0cd6-2fa9-11e7-9663-93a45fa7c007.html](https://www.heraldmailmedia.com/news/local/hunters-oppose-md-and-w-va-parks-deer-control-plan/article_febb0cd6-2fa9-11e7-9663-93a45fa7c007.html)

Another important factor to consider in the balancing of the public good is the fact that, unlike many other states, Maryland's hunting seasons are very long. Part of the basis for these long seasons is that Maryland lacked Sunday hunting for most of its history. When Sunday hunting was introduced, there was not a corresponding shortening of the hunting seasons, so now there are both long seasons and increasing Sunday hunting opportunities.

This bill would authorize Sunday hunting on private land. We of course recognize that private land owners have some right to decide what uses they want to allow on their land. But such rights have never been absolute, as any review of zoning and land use rules can plainly establish. And, as a practical matter the public/private land distinction affords little relief since public and private tracts are often relatively small, non-contiguous, intertwined and rarely well-marked. In our survey, referenced above, 56% of respondents said they ride on trails that cross both public and private land.

#### CONCLUSION

We urge the Committee to give HB 874 an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maryland Horse Council  
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)




# THE MARYLAND HORSE INDUSTRY



Thoroughbred & Standardbred horse racing & breeding ♦ trail riding ♦ steeplechase ♦ sport horse competitions ♦ rodeo ♦ carriage driving ♦ therapy programs ♦ recreation ♦ rescue and more

## A Dynamic Agricultural Entity

# 705,000 ACRES

 25% of the State's agricultural land

Pastures are among the best filtering devices to protect the Chesapeake Bay from harmful runoff

10% of Maryland land



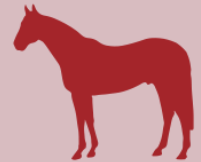
\$80,000,000 on feed, hay and straw

88,000 equine acres preserved forever as farmland



## Number of Horses in Maryland

# 101,457



Horses in Maryland - making MD the number one state in terms of the number of horses per square mile!

10.5 horses per square mile!

## 200

Equine Orgs. Statewide

## 16,000

Horse Farms & Stables

## 35

different equine disciplines

## 40

 breeds

## Integral to the State's Economy

# \$2.1 Billion

Economic Impact



## \$78m

 in tax revenue

## 28,000

 industry jobs

## \$1B

 spent by participants

## A Global Equine Identity



51.8% of households in MD contain horse enthusiasts

10,000 Youths served by MD's Educational Programs

1,500 4H Horse Projects

765 Licensed Riding & Boarding Stables

55 High School Interscholastic Teams

22 Pony Clubs

12 College Equine Teams & Clubs

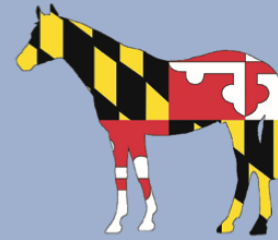


MD is home to International gems:

Triple Crown Race - the Preakness since 1875

International 5-Star at Fair Hill in 2020

# THE MARYLAND HORSE INDUSTRY ECONOMIC IMPACT



## The Racing Sector



Adds **\$365 million** in value to the state economy



Racing Sector Total Economic Impact of:  
**\$572 million**



Supports **5,214 jobs**

## The Competition Sector

Competition Sector Total Economic Impact of:

**\$270 million**



Supports **3,346 jobs**



Adds **\$162 million** in value to the state economy



## The Recreation Sector



Supports **4,971 jobs**



Adds **\$234 million** in value to the state economy

Recreation Sector Total Economic Impact of:  
**\$382 million**



## The Equine Therapy Sector



Adds **\$8.4 million** in value to the state economy



**40** Therapeutic Riding Centers Including over a dozen Veterans groups

Information provided by

The American Horse Council Foundation 2017

Institute for Governmental Service and Research University of Maryland 2017

Maryland Equine Census, USDA 2010

**HB0874-DNR\_LOI\_ENT\_3-15-22.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bunky Luffman

Position: INFO





*Larry Hogan, Governor*  
*Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor*  
*Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary*  
*Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary*

**Bill Number:** House Bill 874

**Short Title:** Prince George's County - Natural Resources – Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones

**Department's Position:** Letter of Information

**Explanation of Department's Position**

HB 874 would authorize Sunday hunting opportunities for deer on certain Sundays during legal seasons in Prince George's County Maryland. It would also establish a uniform statewide safety zone for archery hunters that extends for 50 yards from a dwelling house, residence, church or any other building or camp occupied by human beings. A standard currently held in 10 Maryland counties.

**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.

Despite the success of our current deer hunting model, we are still struggling to mitigate the negative impacts of expanding deer populations in Maryland's suburbs. One of the limiting factors to hunter success in those areas is the requirement for all hunters, including those using archery equipment, to setback 150 yards from any residence or potentially occupied building. This distance requirement effectively eliminates a significant number of otherwise legal and impactful hunting locations.

Recognizing that nearly 90% of the deer taken by archers in Maryland are hunted on private land, it is difficult to increase the overall harvest without providing hunters additional opportunities on those private lands. Reducing the 150-yard setback requirement to 50 yards effectively triples the areas available to hunters. This change offers one of the few remaining cost-effective and reasonable options to increasing the deer harvest in any county and will contribute to an increase in the efficacy of hunting as a deer management and damage-abatement tool in those areas.

For any additional information, please feel free to contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.

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