

## Supporting Testimony on SB 0170 - Unfavorable

### Department of Natural Resources – Lease Agreements – Trail Access Provision

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Now that I'm retired, I find myself spending more time outdoors and getting back into trail riding and now this? Unless an individual is involved in outdoor activities they probably have no clue this has even been drafted. The general population should have serious issue with the lack of visibility this has had in not giving people enough time to have their voices heard, especially when it comes to public safety.

We live in Calvert county on five acres surrounded by residential communities with heavy deer populations. Chesapeake Ranch Estates is about 10 miles behind us with White Sands about 5 miles north and all of us are surrounded by other, smaller residential areas. Although not avid hunters, we do like to practice with our firearms from time to time and to do it safely, we joined a shooting range. I also have two horses who share their pastures with other animals. As it is, those of us that work use weekends, vacation time and long holidays to saddle up and get out with friends and family. Sometimes the kids just saddle up and disappear for the day. Outdoor enthusiasts that don't have horses, take their children and grandchildren out and about, using the designated trails at Flag Ponds, Calvert Cliff State Park or Jefferson Patterson Park and others (like me) prefer to explore other areas of the parks. At least with designated hunting seasons we know what areas to avoid and when to stick closer to home.

Without knowing whose hunting when and/or where, how are people supposed to know what areas we need to avoid and what's to prevent inexperienced hunters from getting too close to areas where someone might be hiking, backpacking, bicycling and/or horseback riding? As it is, those of us that have horses already worry enough about inexperienced hunters, target shooters and poachers who get disorientated or somehow end up too close to our own properties.

These scenarios get even more problematic when you do hear that very distinct sound while dealing with a reactive horse and trying to maintain control and assessing the situation. Then add a couple of children in tow on their own horses for a private lesson. In both instances, everyone made it safely home but you never forgot the events as they unfolded and using one for an unexpected teaching moment! What instructor even thinks about having to teach children with this type of situation let alone how to remain calm in order to maintain control of their own horses! With all the threats today, assessing these situations could take much longer ending in tragedy.

Respectfully,  
June Mellinger  
Calvert County  
Lusby, Maryland

NOTE: Three Known Examples of possibly accidental shootings on page 2.

June 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 (Sunday Fathers Day) - Leonardtown MD - Saint Mary's County

One horse shot in the abdomen and suffered horribly from the tiny 22 caliber rifle and later died.

<https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2021/06/25/police-investigating-unlawful-killing-of-local-horse/>

September 24<sup>th</sup> 2021

Monkton MD - Harford County

Two horses shot in their pasture overnight, possibly one horse died immediately while the other struggled until the next morning and than later died.

<https://www.wbaltv.com/article/reward-increased-to-5000-dollars-fatal-shooting-of-horses-monkton-harford-county/35590751>

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 (Saturday) - Grantsville MD - Garrett County

One horse was found with a gunshot wound in the head after being shot overnight and suffering until he died sometime the next morning.

[https://www.wvnews.com/garrettrepublican/news/horse-shot-to-death-near-grantsville/article\\_f71cadf6-26ab-11ec-b043-b3bd5e69472d.html](https://www.wvnews.com/garrettrepublican/news/horse-shot-to-death-near-grantsville/article_f71cadf6-26ab-11ec-b043-b3bd5e69472d.html)