

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.