



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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March 23, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: Support of SB 497 – Deer Management Permit - Hunting on State Land Leased by Permit Holder – Authorization

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 497 legislation that authorizes an individual who hunts deer under a Deer Management Permit to use a shotgun or breech loading center fired rifle approved by the Department to hunt deer throughout the year, including all deer hunting seasons, on State land leased by a permit holder for the purpose of cultivating crops.

Due to an unintended consequence from a bill that passed nearly 9 years ago, state-owned land that has been used to grow crops by entities like the University of Maryland Extension has been deemed to not be allowed the use of deer crop damage permits unless the land is located in Baltimore County, Charles County, Calvert County, St. Mary's County, or Harford County. The previous bill's intention was to allow the use of a rifle for Deer Management Permit holders in these counties where a shotgun is only allowed for the firearm hunting season. Because only these five counties were listed in the statute, it consequently excluded the other 18 counties from being allowed to use DMP's on state-owned land. It wasn't until 2020, that the AG's office found this discrepancy and had DNR stop issuing the DMP's to the counties not listed in the statute. There was never the intention of removing this valuable tool for the rest of the state. However, the limited language did that.

This bill is a corrective bill to remove that unintended consequence.

MDFB Policy: The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate enactment: Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 497 AND ENCOURAGES A FAVORABLE REPORT.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396