



P.O. Box 501  
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

March 2, 2022

THE HONORABLE KUMAR P. BARVE  
Chair, House Environment & Transportation Committee  
HONORABLE MEMBERS

**RE: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 1067 (WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT – NIGHTTIME SHOOTING)**

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite 100% of all wildlife conservation and management with the purchase of hunting license fees & equipment. Hunters do so willingly because of the **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists. Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net]) and Bill Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND reluctantly accepted the State's 2018 regulatory decision to allow two months of nighttime shooting of deer (February 1 to March 31) -- via DNR's broad regulatory authority under NR §10-206 – for persons duly permitted as a "Deer Cooperator or Agricultural Deer Cooperator". These permits are deer killing operations conducted at night. These nighttime shooting permits supplement Deer Management Permits, aka "DMP's or commonly called "Crop Damage Permits", that allow landowners to take deer 365 days, including all Sundays, during daylight hours only. Collectively, these are industrial-styled deer management tools not to be confused with regular deer hunting by Maryland's license-buying recreational hunters. The links below provide more details on the three special permits.

<http://mdrules.elaws.us/comar/08.03.09.11>  
[https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/ADCP\\_DeerCooperatorPermitGuidelines.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/ADCP_DeerCooperatorPermitGuidelines.pdf)  
[https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/DMP\\_General-Conditions.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/DMP_General-Conditions.pdf)

Evidence of Maryland's farming community push to kill more deer at night was presented on January 11, 2022, when DNR conducted its annual stakeholder meeting to discuss "Concepts" that could lead to proposed regulations. DNR noted, among other things, an interest to extend nighttime shooting for permitted Deer Cooperators and Agricultural Deer Cooperators from February 1 through July 31. Overwhelming opposition was expressed to this proposal. On February 9, 2022, DNR issued its proposed hunting regulations for the 2022/2023 recreational hunting season that would permit nighttime deer shooting by both permittees from January 15 through April 15 annually, thus making 3 months of nighttime shooting legal by both permittees on a 24/7 basis. That proposal is now pending final review/approval. It is worth reinforcing that Deer Cooperator permittees are allowed to use high-powered rifles at night with silencers and night vision optics. These permits are used in rural areas as well as suburbs, including developed areas in Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore counties.

Per DNR's data, "approximately 2,000 deer are taken under the authority of Deer Cooperator Permits on forty permits issued every year. Nearly 10,000 deer are taken on approximately 1,800 "Crop Damage Permits/DMPs" annually. Hunters take an average of 75,000 deer during the annual hunting seasons. In the last 20 years, Maryland's deer population has decreased from about 300,000 to 200,000." Expansion of nighttime shooting of deer – in the eyes of Maryland's hunting community, other than for critical public safety purposes (something we believe is covered under NR 10-206) -- is wrong and violates all ethics of fair chase. We respectfully request a favorable vote on HB 1067.