



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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March 2, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Opposition of HB 1067 - Natural Resources - Wildlife Management - Nighttime Hunting**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony opposing HB 1067. This bill would limit the use of a Deer Cooperator Permit to only two months of the year.

Currently, the Department of Natural Resources is finalizing an expansion of the Deer Cooperator Permit from February 1 through March 31<sup>st</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. The farming community has worked with DNR for several years now working on this tool to not only address over-population of deer herds, but to do it in a way that is safe for the public. The Deer Cooperator Permit is a very heavy lift. It requires the permit applicant to successfully complete a written exam and a shooting proficiency test. After successful completing of these exams, the applicant must submit an operational plan that includes written permission from every landowner that the permit will be used on as well as an aerial photograph of each property that shows all the shooting locations and any safety zones. The applicant must include types of weapons to be used, and avenues for venison use. The applicant must get county approval to be allowed to shoot at night. After the permit is approved and issued, the permit holder must contact the local authorities as well as the Natural Resources Police the day before they go out to harvest deer and must contact NRP two hours after they leave the field each time.

There is a very high bar to reach to be able to get this permit and only allowed to use for two months is too restrictive. Keeping this tool in regulations and based on data and use is much more reliable than restricting legislatively. This tool is not going to eliminate the deer population in Maryland and safety measures required in the permit ensure public safety.

**MDFB Policy:** We support expanding the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer for crop damage.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES HB 1067**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colby Ferguson  
Director of Government Relations

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