

# **Support of HB 592 - Deer Management Permit - Hunti**

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

February 18, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**Re: Support of HB 592 – 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 HB 592 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:** We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 556 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*

# **HB 592 - Holtz Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jacob Holtz

Position: UNF

TO: Del. Kumar Barve and the House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
RE: Opposition to HB 592

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members,

I write today to oppose House Bill 592. This bill would allow farmers who lease state land the ability to obtain crop damage permits for lands they lease from the State, which would allow them to kill deer both during and outside of the established deer season. This is inappropriate for the reasons I will describe below.

Farmers who lease land from the State bid on the parcel and choose to avail themselves of the land that we as citizens of the State collectively own. Under the Public Trust Doctrine, the deer that utilize that land are held in trust by the State for the use and enjoyment of all citizens. Many of these parcels of leased State land are contiguous with public hunting land. This means that members of the public would be trying to hunt the very deer that the farmers would be killing under the crop damage permit. Furthermore, crop damage permits allow farmers and their permittees to use firearms year-round in some counties, while regular hunters only have a two week firearm season in late November-early December, in addition to a couple of days in January (for the eastern 2/3rds of the state). Additional legislation is also being considered that would allow these permit holders to hunt deer at night. The number of deer a farmer may kill under the permit is often in excess of the seasonal limits established by the Department of Natural Resources. Hunting on public land is already difficult for hunters. Allowing farmers the ability to kill deer on these lands year-round and in excess of what would otherwise would be allowed, with weapon types that would otherwise be prohibited by the general public at those times would make the already difficult feat of killing deer on public land almost impossible on those tracts which are adjacent to leased fields. These deer are already incredibly pressured, as the lands are open for all licensed hunters to hunt, but to allow firearm hunting for these deer year round would completely destroy the value of these lands to the hunting public. Even in places where firearms wouldn't be allowed year-round, the additional pressure caused by hunting year-round on these permits would still cause hardship to public land hunters.

I understand and sympathize with farmers who suffer economic damages because of the deer that frequent the property, but a more appropriate solution would be for farmers to bid lower prices for these State lands because they know they will suffer crop losses that they cannot mitigate in the same manner as a farmer who owned his own farm or leased private ground. Please do not punish the hunters of the State by making the already difficult task of successfully harvesting local, free-range meat for our families from public land nearly impossible. For these reasons, I oppose HB 592 and ask that you grant an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

Jacob Holtz

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Uploaded by: Bunky Luffman

Position: INFO



*Larry Hogan, Governor*  
*Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor*  
*Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary*  
*Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary*

**Bill Number:** HB 592

**Short Title:** Deer Management Permit - Hunting on State Land Leased by Permit  
Holder - Authorization

**Department's Position:** Letter of Information

**Explanation of Department's Position**

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on HB 592.

Deer Management Permits (DMPs) are issued by DNR to help landowners and farmers resolve legitimate damage to commercial farm crops, orchards, nurseries and certain managed forests. In Baltimore County, Charles County, Calvert County, St. Mary's County, and Harford County, an individual who hunts deer under a DMP may: use a shotgun or breech loading centerfire rifle approved by DNR to hunt deer throughout the year, including all deer hunting seasons, in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit. Permit holders may also hunt on state lands that are leased to cultivate crops in those five counties in locations and under conditions set by DNR in the permit.

This bill expands the use of DMPs from the five counties noted above to all public lands in all counties in Maryland beginning July 1, 2022. The bill also authorizes all DMP permit holders throughout the state to use specified weapons, including centerfire rifles, to hunt deer throughout the year, including all deer hunting seasons, in the locations and under the conditions set forth in a permit. Currently only certain firearms are legal for deer hunting in certain counties. In addition to several other locations across the state, HB 592 would authorize the University of Maryland, Wye Education Center to harvest deer on a Deer Management Permit outside of the regular deer hunting seasons and bag limits in Queen Anne's county.

DNR supports expanded hunting opportunities and supports deer harvest on public lands in certain circumstances so long as public safety issues are addressed and certain land areas are excluded such as a field edge along a park trail or a day use area that is regularly used by park visitors.

Instead of *requiring* DNR, and other public land holders, to award DMPs and allow the use of specified weapons, it may be more prudent to instead *authorize* DNR, and other public land

Contact: Bunky Luffman, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
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holders, to award DMPs in all counties and provide those public landholders discretion over the locations and permit conditions.

For any additional information, please contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.