

Stein Testimony HB 1067.pdf

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Position: FAV

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Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees
Chair, Environment
Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Open Space



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The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of HB 1067
Natural Resources - Wildlife Management – Nighttime Hunting

Chairman Barve and fellow Committee members:

Deer are a publicly owned resource. That's why DNR specifies the times when deer can be hunted for recreational purposes.

However, we also recognize that deer can pose a problem for farmers. That's why management tools exist for deer-related mitigation outside the recreational hunting season. These include:

1. Deer Management Permits, which allow landowners to take deer 365 days, including all Sundays, during daylight hours only.
2. Deer Cooperator Permits, which help control deer populations in densely populated areas where recreational hunting is out of the question, for public safety purposes ; and
3. Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permits, which help mitigate economic losses incurred by landowners recreational hunting and Deer Management Permits.

While these management tools help control deer on farmland, they have been insufficient, so DNR also allows holders of Deer Cooperator Permits and Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permits to shoot deer at night for two months of the year.

But DNR is considering expanding the authority to shoot deer at night beyond the two months. Hunters and the Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus have a big problem with that.

That's because night-time hunting of deer allows the use of "jacklighting." This is a practice used to kill deer at night by shining high-powered lights into their eyes, temporarily blinding them, and allowing them to be easily shot (hence the phrase, "like a deer blinded in headlights"). This is a terrible practice that violates conservation-minded hunting via the fair-chase doctrine.

Hunters, the Sportsmen's Caucus, and I believe that DNR should not allow this type of hunting for more than two months each year. That's what HB 1067 would codify. Without this, DNR could allow deer to be killed all day and all night, 365 day a year, including Sundays.

Further, the bill provides accountability by ensuring DNR documents every issuance of these permits.

HOM Testimony on HB 1067 (Nighttime Shooting) Final

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



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 85th 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/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.

Opposition of HB 1067 - Natural Resources - Wildli

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: UNF



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

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 31st to January 15th through April 15th. 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

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Uploaded by: Lisa Eutsler

Position: INFO



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

Bill Number: HB 1067

Short Title: Natural Resources – Wildlife Management – Nighttime Hunting

Department’s Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department’s Position

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on HB 1067.

Deer Cooperator Permits (DCPs) are issued by DNR. DCPs can be issued for year-round operations if the purpose is to address a human safety concern such as keeping runways safe at airports. DNR also offers DCPs for agricultural purposes, which are limited to use in February and March.

DCP permit holders utilize the services of deer cooperators. Deer cooperators are businesses that provide deer control assistance where deer hunting alone is not a viable option. They are licensed by DNR to use non-lethal and/or lethal deer management techniques to help resolve deer problems. Deer cooperators must follow an operational plan approved by DNR. Most deer harvested under authority of DCPs are removed outside of the hunting season. None of those deer count against the hunting season bag limit. Approximately 2,000 deer are taken under the authority of DCPs on 40 permits issued every year.

DCPs should not be confused with Deer Management Permits (DMPs), also referred to as “crop damage permits,” which are limited to day-time shooting and available year-round. Nearly 10,000 deer are taken on approximately 1,800 “Crop Damage Permits/DMPs” annually. Both permit types (DCP and DMP) provide essential opportunities for permit holders to address human safety issues and crop damage.

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