

SB310_FAV_AlyssaDangel.pdf

Uploaded by: Alyssa Dangel

Position: FAV

February 8, 2023

Budget and Tax Committee; Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB 310: Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon chairman and members of the committee. My name is Alyssa Dangel and I am here to testify on senate bill 310. This bill would greatly benefit many animals. It would also help so many people.

Bears living in areas near human settlements or around constant human activity often come to rely on food that is accidentally provided by humans, most often during spring and fall. As more people live in rural areas, rural areas become suburban areas and more buildings are encroaching onto sparse forest areas where bears are living. Bears are now encroaching onto these suburban areas and eating the trash, among other things. To vote yes on SB310 would be helping stop bears coming into conflict with people.

My family and I have had experiences not unlike bears attacking livestock, where a fox was attacking our chickens. The way to solve the problem with the bears is the same way we solved our problem with the fox. We invested in a fence around our chicken coop. This is relevant because putting a fence around our chicken coop saved the chickens and putting a fence around livestock will save them from bears!

The same fox that was killing our chickens was eventually hit by a car. That didn't solve the problem because another fox just moved in. It is the exact same with the bears. The only thing you do when you shoot a bear that is harming your livestock is prolonging the inevitable; having another bear move back in and killing a poor bear who didn't need to die. This bill would not only save the livestock that are being slaughtered by the bears, but also save those beautiful creatures. The logic is evident. If we continue the way we are going, more needless deaths to living creatures, who deserve life and to not to be killed.

Historically, American black bears occupied the majority of North America's forested regions. Today, they are primarily limited to small, forested areas that are most times near human settlements. The reason bears attack livestock is because they see food that is near them and easy to get. However, they would not be able to attack the livestock if there were fences or other means of protection.

The bears do not only harm the livestock, but harm crops as well. Bears trample the crops and cause a poor harvest. But how will shooting one bear solve that problem? Putting fences or other deterrents around the crops will be much more beneficial towards keeping bears out of the crops. This way the harvest will be more prosperous; also, the fence will keep other animals out of the crops as well.

Save livestock, save agriculture, save bears. Please vote yes on Senate Bill 310.

Alyssa Dangel | AlyssaJDangel@gmail.com

HOM Testimony on SB 310 (Black Bear Conflict Resol

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

February 8, 2023

THE HONORABLE BRIAN J. FELDMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY
AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 310 (Natural Resources – Black Bear Conflict Reduction
and Damage Reimbursement Fund -- Uses)**

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite almost 100% of all wildlife management and research costs through their purchase of hunting licenses, stamps and equipment. For the record, hunters do so willingly b/c of **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.

https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/introduction_to_american_conservation_funding_.pdf

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net])
William R. Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND support Senate Bill 310 b/c the State has a responsibility to mitigate potentially fatal conflicts between bears and humans. Taking of bears by hunters is a proven means of management control; but, hunting per se cannot prevent bear/human conflicts as Maryland's bear population continues to increase. We commend Senators West and McKay for proposing this commonsense approach as duly articulated by HSUS, et al.

We do have one idea for the Committee's consideration re the \$1 million mandated spending for proposed Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund. Legislation is pending consideration by the 2023 General Assembly which would increase hunting license/stamp sales with some estimates circulating that the increase could annually generate \$8 million plus in special fund revenues, aka SB 327. It would be a fair and proper use of these dollars for the purposes intended by Senate Bill 310.

Respectfully submitted,

William R. Miles, Advocate

SB310_FAV_HSUS.pdf

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Position: FAV



February 8, 2023
Budget and Tax Committee
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
SB310
Natural Resources - Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund – Uses
FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our Maryland members and supporters, supports SB310, which provides communities and farmers alike with funds to *prevent* human-bear conflicts *before* they occur.

This legislation will help provide funding for innovative programs that promoted coexistence in other states. For example, in Durango, Colorado, Dr. Johnson and others set up a bear trash-proofing experiment. They gave two study groups of residents bear-resistant trash containers, enhanced those residents' bear-aware education, served residents with warnings and worked with the city to increase law enforcement. Meanwhile, two control groups of residents did not receive free bear-proof trash cans, enhanced education, warnings or law enforcement. The outcome was significant: the study groups saw bear conflicts decline by 60 percent. During this study, bears learned to leave the areas where residents complied with trash laws and shifted to areas of the city where human foods were readily abundant. Dr. Johnson emphasizes that law enforcement was a key factor in reducing bear conflicts in Durango.¹ At the Oct. 2022, 6th International Human-Bear Conflict Workshop, that group of researchers reported that 98% of trash cans in Durango, Colorado are now bear resistant, with two-thirds having automatic locking lids. This increased compliance dramatically—researchers reported 92% compliance with automatically locking lids.² Education and law enforcement are key to reducing urban bear conflicts. Rural communities similarly need help with installing electric fencing or other deterrents around beehives, chicken coops, livestock pastures or even some crops.

It is clear from multiple human-bear conflict studies that bear hunting is not an appropriate method of addressing that concern.³ A brand new journal article shows that when researchers in Canada tested whether a new bear-hunting season in Ontario reduced human-bear conflicts, it did not even as hunters killed a “significant” number of bears. Researchers write, “there was no concomitant reduction in interactions or incidents and, in fact, these [interactions] were higher in areas with the new spring season relative to control areas.”⁴

Black bears are sparsely populated across vast areas. In their lifetimes, bears produce few offspring, but devoted mothers care for their cubs for extended periods—up to two years. Females are not adults until they are between 3-5 years old. And they produce litters only every 2-3 years. Only about 50% of their cubs ever make it to their first year of life.

If that weren't enough of a challenge for them, in North America bears have faced substantial habitat losses and that problem is worsening. Bears are limited by many factors including erratic weather conditions that harm their natural food sources, such as acorns, making them unavailable in some years.⁵ If bears don't put on enough weight before they enter their dens to hibernate, females will not reproduce and some bears, especially cubs, will not survive the winter.

Bears are extremely valuable to our ecosystems and economy, which is why we should protect them in Maryland. Researchers find that bears are as intelligent as great apes. And they're hugely beneficial to their habitats. For



example, they spread more seed than birds, and when they're out of the den, their presence protects gray foxes from mortality by other medium-sized carnivores. Bears are one of the most photographed and beloved of wildlife in North America. In some states or provinces, local communities literally earn millions of dollars from black bear eco-tourism.

We understand that the bill has a large fiscal note and requires an annual appropriation into the Fund. We welcome a conversation with this Committee regarding the funding level you deem appropriate given the State's other budgetary considerations. We also appreciate that legislation has been introduced this session that would increase funding for Maryland's Wildlife and Heritage Service, and believe a portion of that funding could be used to offset this cost. And the benefits of this bill in both directly decreasing human financial loss does offset the cost to the State in funding it.

Life for bears grows harder every year. In order to co-exist with them, we need to use innovation to prevent conflicts before they occur. We thank the committee for its consideration of the bill and urge a favorable vote on SB310 .

For more information contact Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Maryland State Director
jbevandangel@humanesociety.org | C 410-303-7954

¹ Heather Johnson et al., "Assessing Ecological and Social Outcomes of a Bear-Proofing Experiment," *The Journal of Wildlife Management* (2018).

² Cassandre Venumiere-Lefebvre et al., "Follow-up Evaluation on the Effectiveness of a Large-Scale Effort to Use Bear-Resistant Garbage Cans, Including Automatic and Manual-Locking Cans, for Limiting Conflict in Durango, Co" (paper presented at the 6th International Human-Bear Workshop, Lake Tahoe, NV, 2022).

³ H. E. Johnson et al., "Shifting Perceptions of Risk and Reward: Dynamic Selection for Human Development by Black Bears in the Western United States," *Biological Conservation* 187 (2015); H. E. Johnson et al., "Human Development and Climate Affect Hibernation in a Large Carnivore with Implications for Human-Carnivore Conflicts," *Journal of Applied Ecology* 55, no. 2 (2018); S. Baruch-Mordo et al., "Stochasticity in Natural Forage Production Affects Use of Urban Areas by Black Bears: Implications to Management of Human-Bear Conflicts," *Plos One* 9, no. 1 (2014); D. L. Garshelis et al., "Is Diversionary Feeding an Effective Tool for Reducing Human-Bear Conflicts? Case Studies from North America and Europe," *Ursus* 28, no. 1 (2017); M. A. Barrett et al., "Testing Bear-Resistant Trash Cans in Residential Areas of Florida," *Southeastern Naturalist* 13, no. 1 (2014); Elizabeth F. Pienaar, David Telesco, and Sarah Barrett, "Understanding People's Willingness to Implement Measures to Manage Human-Bear Conflict in Florida," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 79, no. 5 (2015).

⁴ Joseph M. Northrup et al., "Experimental Test of the Efficacy of Hunting for Controlling Human-Wildlife Conflict," *The Journal of Wildlife Management* (2023).

⁵ Johnson et al., "Human Development and Climate Affect Hibernation in a Large Carnivore with Implications for Human-Carnivore Conflicts.,"; D. L. Lewis et al., "Modeling Black Bear Population Dynamics in a Human-Dominated Stochastic Environment," *Ecological Modelling* 294 (2014).

Natural Resources- Black Bear Conflict Reduction a

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 8, 2023

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Natural Resources – Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund – Uses – SB 310 - Support

Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, my name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee vote favorably for Natural Resources – Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund – Uses – SB 310.

This bill would allow the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to authorize grants from the Fund to be made for projects that reduce conflicts between black bears and humans. It would rename the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to be the Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund and require a certain amount of the Fund to be reserved for black bear damage reimbursement - and increase the minimum and maximum amounts of reimbursement from the Fund per person annually authorized for damage caused by black bears.

These changes to the existing program would expand the Black Bear Reimbursement Fund and allow it to be used as a proactive tool to fund conflict avoidance. It would open the fund to residents and towns as well as farmers.

The goal of this bill is to take a preventative approach to reduce conflicts with Black Bears. The grants would be for projects that reduce conflicts between humans and black bears through non-lethal methods such as bear-proof trashcans, appropriate fencing, and additional programs to reduce the number of Black Bears that frequent agricultural and community areas with community support. The grants could not be used to reduce the Black Bear population by lethal methods. By taking protective measures for property, people, and pets, Maryland makes a worthwhile investment as the Fund would enable recipients to prevent conflicts with black bears before they occur, saving lives and property.

Thank you to Senator West for introducing this bill. I urge a favorable report for SB 310.

SB310 Amendment.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher West

Position: FWA

SB0310/933627/1

BY: Senator West

(To be offered in the Budget and Taxation Committee and the
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 310

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 10, strike “increasing” and substitute “repealing”; and in line 11, before “maximum” insert “increasing the”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, in line 21, strike “**\$50,000**” and substitute “**\$75,000**”.

On page 4, strike beginning with “less” in line 13 down through “or” in line 14.

SB310 West FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher West

Position: FWA



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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February 8th , 2023

Senate Budget and Taxation & Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
The Honorable Guy Guzzone and Brian Feldman
2 West Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401

Re: Senate Bill 310 – Natural Resources – Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund - Uses

Dear Chairmans Guzzone, Feldman, and members of The Budget and Tax and E3 Committees,

Senate Bill 310 aims to support Maryland farmers while reducing their need to use lethal force against black bears. For context, Maryland has a *Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund*. The fund allows farmers to seek reimbursement after bears damage their property. Unfortunately, because of funding limitations the Fund cannot meet the annual requests it receives. The only other tool available to farmers is requesting a permit to shoot the bear that's damaging their property. 10 bears were killed in 2022 under these permits and should be noted that black bears repopulate slowly.

Senate Bill 310 does not change the availability of those permits, or impact bear hunting. It seeks to reduce the need for those permits by preventing property damage from bears before it occurs. Bears are an important component to our ecosystem for regulating habitats, and to our economy for tourism. The appropriations increase requested for this Fund is a worthwhile investment because it's preventative in nature. Not only does it reduce the likelihood of a bear being shot, but it also ensures the *Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund* is not overwhelmed when requests are submitted.

This bill is a win/win for both Marylanders and wildlife and is broadly supported by farmers, Maryland hunters, and environmental groups.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 310 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Support of SB 310 - Natural Resources - Black Bear

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FWA



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

February 8, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 310 - Natural Resources - Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund - Uses**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 310, legislation that alters the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to authorize grants from the Fund to be made for projects that reduce conflicts between black bears and humans. It renames the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to be the Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund. The bill increases the minimum and maximum amounts of reimbursement from the Fund per person annually authorized for damage caused by black bears from \$200 to \$500 and \$3,000 to \$5,000. It also requires a minimum of \$50,000 be available annually for the reimbursement of black bear damage. Lastly, it requires the Governor to include at least \$1,000,000 in the annual budget bill for the Fund.

Currently, there is very little funding in the program and the funding sources are through private donations and the sales of a bear portrait by DNR. This bill would put funding into a much-needed program for farmers and landowners that have damage from black bears.

MDFB Policy: We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the black bear population in our state. We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by wildlife.

Maryland Farm Bureau requests two amendments to the bill. We ask that the reimbursement fund be increased to \$75,000 annually and the minimum amount of the reimbursement requirement be eliminated so smaller damages aren't excluded from being reimbursed.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 310 & REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

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