



P.O. Box 501
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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

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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