

HOM Testimony on House Bill 983 (Omnibus Hunting B

Uploaded by: Bill Miles

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

March 3, 2023

SUPPORT

House Bill 983 (Hunting, Wildlife Conservation and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps)

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: (1) 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 (link below); and (2) hunting in Maryland is a powerful economic engine as reported by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (link below).

https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/introduction_to_american_conservation_funding_.pdf
<https://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/Maryland-Factsheet.pdf>

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

HONORABLE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND support House Bill 983 as expressed herein. We have developed this written testimony with an eye towards questions likely to be asked with attendant responses...*responses provided by Maryland's Department of Natural Resources for each question asked.*

QUESTION 1: What is the nexus between federal Pittman/Robertson ("PR") matching dollars and State hunting license fee revenues, aka ratio of \$3 to \$1?

Every license sold with a minimum of \$5 in revenue is equal to \$15 in reimbursable funds from the feds via PR.

QUESTION 2: Quantify the impact on wildlife management, research, and habitat improvement from not having an influx of new State and federal dollars since the last hunting license fee increase in 1989?

The value of a dollar from 1989 to 2013 has risen to \$2.40. So a \$24.50 resident license in 1989 should be approximately \$60 today if the license fee tracked with inflation over time. If the license fee had been increased ten years ago to even a modest \$35, then we would have generated an additional \$38M in additional State revenues AND over \$115M in additional PR funds. In other words, we've left over \$115M in potential free federal dollars on the table in just the last decade. By State and federal 'rule' all of those funds must be used to improve

wildlife habitat and support wildlife-dependent recreation in Maryland. We've lost more than \$100M in opportunity to do so – just in the last ten years.

QUESTION 3: Projected State special fund revenue attainment from increasing hunting license fees under the bill coupled with a projected attainment of federal PR matching dollars by doing so?

\$2.2M in State special funds. \$6.6M in federal funds. Just shy of \$9M total.

QUESTION 4: With additional federal and State dollars in hand, how does WHS (DNR's Wildlife & Heritage Service) envision spending those dollars – both short term and long term – to mitigate the detrimental impact on wildlife management/research/habitat improvement?

USFWS (United States Fish & Wildlife Service) just projected another record bump to the PR funding opportunities available to the states. Every year, for the past five or so, has recorded the highest potential revenues into the PR funding pool – every year that we do not have the stateside dollars risks leaving federal funds on the table...where other states may take advantage of what would have been ours.

The new dollars would be used to help us manage the expanded portfolio of land we manage – up from 40K acres in 2000 to nearly 130K acres today – making WHS one of the largest land managers in Maryland. We would improve boundary marking, parking facilities and other infrastructure to ensure our wildlife enthusiast visitors, hunters, and others, have a wonderful experience at our wildlife management areas. We will continue to pursue a first-ever study on sika deer populations, wild turkey populations and renew our scientific analysis of our black bear population, including the suspected growth of the population into more suburban counties east of Frederick. Expansion of our efforts to mitigate overabundant deer populations would also be possible as we have no other source of funding to assist farmers and other landowners and their conflicts with deer.

QUESTION 5: What has been Virginia's experience with Sunday waterfowl hunting in the broadest of terms?

There was no measurable impact on waterfowl harvest with the addition of Sundays and no negative impact to the overall waterfowl or other user experience since most waterfowl hunting occurs on private land early in the morning and often over water in the winter – a place and time when few others are out and about in this region.

Below is a relevant quote from Virginia wildlife officials:

“The addition of Sundays for migratory bird hunting did not change the overall duck and goose harvest appreciably. Duck harvest on Sundays was comparable to duck harvest occurring on Mondays-Thursdays and about 1/3 that of Saturdays.”

QUESTION 6: When was the last survey undertaken – assuming Virginia-based Responsive Management (“RM”) – that quantified Maryland hunters' responses in favor of Sunday waterfowl hunting?

2020 study by RM – key takeaways for purposes here: The large majority of hunters want more days of Sunday hunting (72% want more), far exceeding either those who want the same level of Sunday hunting (18%). Additionally, the large majority say that their hunting participation in Maryland would increase (69%) if there were more Sunday hunting days. (THIS LAST POINT IS CRITICAL TO R3 [“Recruitment, Retention & Reactivation] – especially retention of existing hunters).

Economics of Hunting in Maryland

Spending per day: \$2.2 million

Salaries and Wages: \$387 million

Federal Taxes: \$96 million

State & Local Taxes: \$84 million

Ripple Effect: \$1.25 billion

Source: USFWS

QUESTION 7: What is the most recent hunting-related data available that speaks to the economics of hunting in Maryland?

According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Maryland Sportsmen & Women support: (1) spending per day @ \$2.2 million; (2) salaries and wages @ \$387 million; (3) federal taxes @ \$96 million; (4) State and local taxes @ \$84 million; and (5) ripple effect @ \$1.25 billion.

QUESTION 8: Does WHS currently administer a Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program or some facsimile?

Sort of – we have staff in our Game Program (under Associate Director Karina Stonesifer) who also does education and outreach – including Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program (BOW), National Archery in Schools Program (NASP) and Hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3).

QUESTION 9: Identify – if possible – envisioned benefits of creating/funding a Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program within DNR?

We would startup a first-ever effort to truly advance our work on BOW, R3 and NASP, including a focus in counties and towns where we've traditionally lacked the staffing (and therefore time) to put our team onsite to reach out, teach and stay connected. We also have a vision to connect with the universities and colleges in Maryland, again with a focus on urban and suburban, to build interest in the programs above in those communities. We have very good data suggesting that students in these settings are interested in learning more about wildlife and outdoor recreation but do not have ready-access to teachers or mentors. We intend to build that bridge with this new program.

QUESTION 10: Are there any other states with something comparable to Maryland's envisioned Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program? If so, what have been the reportable outcomes?

In a June 22 study of R3 efficacy, eight states showed measurable "lift" (meaning hunters retained or recruited after being introduced to the state's R3 programming). Of those eight, two have similar demographics to Maryland (Massachusetts and Connecticut) – they experienced approximately 25% lift rates for their hunter R3 efforts.

QUESTION 11: How much existing State-owned land is currently available for public hunting, aka 50% of the Chesapeake Forest Lands?

But for some highly-developed or ordinance restricted insular locations, nearly all the DNR-managed land is open to some form of hunting – there are very few examples of un-hunted properties across the State.

QUESTION 12: Does DNR/WHS have a targeted acreage/geographical goal with increased dollars for the State purchase of additional lands of public hunting?

The goal is to spend down the available POS (Program Open Space) coffers on valuable ecological and recreational lands. WHS has been a primary participant in that effort and has seen land portfolio growth more than most other units of government over the past two decades. We will continue to push for those opportunities to the extent we have new funding to support responsible management of those lands.

QUESTION 13: Has Responsive Management – and/or any other public or private surveying entity – reported on the interest of Maryland hunters for additional public lands for increased hunting opportunities?

Several inquiries have shown that hunters would welcome more hunting land, particularly as interest in non-resident hunters has grown (70% of non-resident hunters indicated a very good experience with hunting in Maryland...2008 finding by Responsive Management).

QUESTION 14: Will FWS approve of federal PR dollars for (1) WHS hiring 8 new employees; and (2) purchasing privately-owned land for public hunting usage?

Yes – USFWS’ sideboards require that we use their funds (or our stateside license and stamp revenues) for wildlife habitat/management for birds and mammals only (no insects or herps) and wildlife-dependent recreation (hunting). So to the extent that those staff and funds are ONLY used for wildlife habitat, management and hunting-related activities, then we will be reimbursed for those expenditures at a rate of \$3 to \$1.

Respectfully submitted,

William R. Miles, Advocate



**MARYLAND HAS LOST AN ESTIMATED \$100 MILLION
IN MATCHING FEDERAL DOLLARS OVER THE LAST 10
YEARS**

**SURVEYS INDICATE MARYLAND HUNTERS FAVOR
SUNDAY WATERFOWL HUNTING**

**REPORTS PROVE THAT MORE HUNTERS DESIRE
ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HUNTING LANDS**

**FEDERAL USE OF MATCHING DOLLARS FOR NEW
WHS POSITIONS AND PURCHASE OF NEW LANDS
FOR PUBLIC HUNTING PURPOSES IS PERMITTED**

**EXPERIENCE IN VIRGINIA WITH SUNDAY
WATERFOWL HUNTING INDICATES NO DETRIMENTAL
IMPACT ON THE RESOURCE**

SB 327 Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor

Uploaded by: Cait Kerr

Position: FAV



Protecting nature. Preserving life.

The Nature Conservancy
Maryland/DC Chapter
425 Barlow Pl., Ste 100
Bethesda, MD 20814

tel (301) 897-8570
fax (301) 897-0858
nature.org

Wednesday February 15, 2023

TO: Brian Feldman, Chair of Senate Education, Energy and the Environment; and Committee Members
FROM: Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; and Caitlin Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation & Climate Policy Analyst
POSITION: Support SB 327 Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 327 offered by Senator Elfreth. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

SB 327 would allow the Heritage Conservation Fund to be used for land acquisition for hunting and establishes a Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program within the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Investments like these will continue to foster an interest in outdoor recreation in Maryland as well as build stewardship and wildlife conservation interest and access in communities across our state. DNR currently uses several factors to determine what lands qualify for acquisition through the Heritage Conservation Fund. These lands are important natural areas that have ecological and conservation value, providing habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species or unique natural communities. SB 327 would enable the fund to acquire lands that the general public can use for hunting. Conservation organizations like TNC use the Heritage Conservation Fund recommendations for land acquisitions, which can expand access to hunting on public and private lands across the state.

Maryland's outdoor recreation economy generates 109,000 direct jobs, \$14 billion in consumer spending, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and \$951 million in state and local tax revenue. State hunting and fishing licenses and permits as well as federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing gear are the backbone for funding state wildlife agencies. Accessing this funding is key in wildlife management and curbing biodiversity loss. Outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting are important access points to nature for many residents, in addition to providing substantial economic benefits.

SB 327 would also establish the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program within DNR. Environmental education helps to foster a deeper understanding of the critical role that nature plays in our everyday lives, and can create future natural resource conservation advocates. This program would play a key role in building interest in outdoor recreation, wildlife conservation, and environmental stewardship by expanding outreach to communities across the state. The program would engage with elementary and middle school students, community leaders, organizations and universities across the state, as well as with groups who have historically been denied access to outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship opportunities. By expanding access to natural places across our state for recreation and conservation, and by investing in educational programs, we can expand Marylander's awareness and appreciation of nature and continue to protect these important places.

The Nature Conservancy commends Senator Elfreth for introducing this legislation to invest in outdoor recreation, wildlife conservation, and environmental stewardship across the state for current and future generations.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 327.

MSF Testimony SB327.pdf

Uploaded by: Carl Wagner

Position: FAV



**Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401**

RE: Senate Bill SB327 - *Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, & Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, & Stamps*

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Sportsmen's Foundation was founded to Conserve, Promote, & Protect Maryland Lands, Wildlife, & Wildlife Habitat for the future enjoyment of all citizens. With this in mind we wholeheartedly **SUPPORT** SB327.

This omnibus bill represents the joint efforts of many Maryland residents, hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists and law-makers. This wide-sweeping bill not only increases revenue but increases accessibility and opportunities for many individuals to participate in outdoor recreational activities across the state.

- Community Outreach for Hunting & Conservation: Provides access to communities that have historically not been included or had access to hunting & conservation programs.
- Revenue: The hunting community has agreed to raise fees imposed on themselves via Licensing & Stamp fee increases which will result in an additional \$8mil due to federal matching fund programs.
- Use of Funds: the increased revenues will be used to purchase more lands, hire more staff for DNR, and habitat restoration
- Address the overpopulation of White-tailed Deer throughout the state on public & private lands
- The creation of the sika deer stamp/permit
- Clarify & Strengthen CH523 regarding the liability of landowners who allow hunting on their private lands
- Allowance of Sunday hunting for Migratory Game Birds

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Carl F. Wagner
Executive Director
Maryland Sportsmen's Foundation

Stephen R. Holt
Asst. Director
Maryland Sportsmen's Foundation

Support of SB 327 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

February 15, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 327 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 327. This comprehensive wildlife management and hunting bill does many things. First, it cleans up the landowner liability language to ensure a landowner has proper liability coverage if they allow hunters to hunt on their land. Secondly, it establishes the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation. Next, it establishes a stamp for hunting sika deer.

One of the biggest parts of the bill is it increased the fees for many of the hunting licenses and stamps. These fees haven't been increased in 36 years. The increased fees are to generate the needed funding for DNR to qualify for the available USDA matching funds that the department is currently receiving. These additional funding will allow DNR's Wildlife services division to provide the needed food habitats in Wildlife Management Areas along with starting a farmer cost-share program to plant private land forage crops (AKA sacrificial crops) to help curb the crop loss on farms due to wildlife damage.

MDFB Policy: We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 327 & REQUESTS 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

Julia Peebles Testimony on SB327.pdf

Uploaded by: Julia Peebles

Position: FAV

Julia Peebles Testimony on SB327 (Maryland State Senate)
Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment
Wednesday, February 15th, 2023

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB327 to advance conservation funding and provide equitable access to hunting and outdoor recreation in Maryland. I also want to thank Senator Elfreth and all the sponsors for leading this effort, as well as partners like Delta Waterfowl for advocating for this important bill.

My name is Julia Peebles, and I am the Manager of Agriculture and Sustainability Policy for Ducks Unlimited. I am also a lifelong hunter, a new mother of a 10-month-old daughter, and a resident of Prince George's County. This bill resonates on both a professional and personal level for me, and through multiple conversations and negotiations, it is the farthest we have come in decades to making hunting and outdoor recreation accessible and more equitable for all Marylanders.

Being able to hunt waterfowl on Sundays and creating a program for the DNR to engage historically underserved communities, will ensure that future generations from all parts of Maryland will be able to enjoy what President Roosevelt aptly called our "rightful heritage," the great outdoors. These small changes to increase access and opportunity for youth, people of color and women, among others, will be a watershed moment in the state's history and will cement the reputation of Maryland's tremendous natural resources being the most accessible in the country.

Additionally, the increases in license and stamp fees will not burden the taxpayer, but benefit all Marylanders, not just hunters. The bulk of DNR's conservation funding is generated through these license fees. And because the vast majority of wildlife that DNR manages are non-game species, all people in Maryland will draw benefits, whether they hunt or not.

Right now, my daughter is too young to hunt, but I'm hoping to expose her to the outdoors this summer, even if that means she's playing (or eating) the dirt while I'm gardening or discovering earth worms in the ground and skinks crawling around. When my daughter is older, I want her to join me in the field and grow up with the same appreciation for the outdoors and a strong conservation ethic as I have. I can't help but think this moment will only be made easier for working parents like me when this legislation is passed. Our time off on the weekends will be maximized to ensure that our hunting heritage and love of nature persists through the generations. After today, with your approval, our state will be one step closer to ensuring that our woods and waters are not just the entitlement of the few, but the birthright of the many. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this legislation and thank you for your leadership on conservation issues in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Peebles', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julia Peebles
Manager of Agriculture and Sustainability Policy
Ducks Unlimited

Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recrea

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 15, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps – SB 327 - Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. 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 Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps – SB 327.

This bill would alter the purpose of the Heritage Conservation Fund to include acquiring interests in land that can be used by the general public for hunting; establishing the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide to outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation; establishing a stamp for hunting sika deer; authorizing a nonresident attending a college or university in the State to purchase a resident hunting license; altering the fees charged for certain hunting and trapping licenses, permits, and stamps; codifying and altering the fees charged for a nonresident trapping license and a group furbearer permit; codifying the fee charged for an individual furbearer permit; authorizing a person to hunt migratory game birds on Sundays; altering the purposes for which the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund may be used; requiring the Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to develop a plan to address the overpopulation of deer in the State; requiring that a portion of an increase in certain funding be used for new Position Identification Numbers for the Department of Natural Resources relating to hunting, wildlife conservation, and outdoor recreation.

This bill covers a wide range of constituencies and programs to accomplish its goals. We support the programs and many facets of this bill that would improve the relationship between people and wildlife in our state. The funds raised by this legislation would be used for programs that address issues we hear about from Marylanders such as addressing the overpopulation of deer in Maryland. By establishing a comprehensive Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation, our state engages current stakeholders and ensures that the next generation of Marylanders is equipped with the information and resources to deal with issues facing Maryland and wildlife.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Elfreth for her sponsorship of SB 327 and ask the committee to give this bill a favorable report.

2023 - SB 327 - Hunting and Wildlife Conservation

Uploaded by: Matthew Pica

Position: FAV

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Health and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**SENATE BILL 327
SUPPORT**

Re: Senate Bill 327 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (“NSSF”), I write today to express our strong support for Senate Bill 327 (“SB 327”), a bipartisan bill introduced by Senator Sarah Elfreth. SB 327 will alter the purpose of the Heritage Conservation Fund to include acquiring interests in land that can be used by the general public for hunting; establishing the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation; establishing a stamp for hunting sika deer; authorizing a nonresident attending a college or university in the State to purchase a resident hunting license; etc.

As the trade association for America’s firearms, ammunition, hunting, and recreational shooting sports industry, NSSF seeks to promote, protect, and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. We have a membership of more than 10,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, and sportsmen’s organizations. Our manufacturer members make the firearms used by law-abiding Maryland sportsmen and women, the U.S. military, and law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

This important piece of legislation would significantly increase conservation funding for the state of Maryland – adding almost \$9 million per year in additional funding to the Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”). Additionally, SB 327 would create new, or expand, outdoor recreational opportunities for all Marylanders, as well as establish new programs for the Maryland DNR to recruit people into the outdoors.

Senate Bill 327 would do the following:

- Increase the price of resident and non-resident hunting licenses by a few dollars (to keep up with inflation);
- Increase the price of the state duck stamp by a few dollars, allowing more funds to go into waterfowl conservation efforts;
- Create a new sika deer stamp for hunters wishing to hunt sika deer;
- Remove the statewide prohibition against hunting waterfowl on Sunday;

- Establish the “Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program” within the Maryland DNR to help provide outdoor and hunting education to underserved communities;
- Allow non-resident students at a college or university in Maryland to obtain a license under a resident rate; and more.

Hunting and associated industries represent the largest financial supporters of wildlife conservation throughout the United States, having contributed over \$14 billion to habitat conservation and wildlife management through Pittman Robertson excise tax payments since 1991. In addition to excise tax payments, hunting and fishing licenses constitute the second largest source of revenue for state fish and wildlife agencies. Excise tax contributions and license receipts will inevitably increase with the removal of Sunday hunting restrictions.

The passage of Senate Bill 327 will help ensure Maryland’s strong hunting heritage and wildlife can be enjoyed and passed onto future generations of conservationists, and it is for these reasons that the National Shooting Sports Foundation supports the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Trevor W. Santos".

Trevor W. Santos

Ducks Written Testimony SB327.pdf

Uploaded by: Nikki Ghorpade

Position: FAV



February 14th, 2023

TO: Senator Bryan J. Feldman (Chair)
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan (Vice Chair)
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for Maryland

RE: Support for Senate Bill 327 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members,

On behalf Ducks Unlimited (DU), we are writing to **SUPPORT Senate Bill 327**. This legislation, which represents the culmination of work among Maryland residents, hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, lawmakers and conservation organizations, will drastically increase hunting access and opportunity while boosting conservation funding for wildlife and their habitats for all to enjoy across Maryland. We are writing to highlight just a few of the most important provisions and provide some additional background to underscore the positive impact.

DU is the world leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation and has been protecting and restoring the continent's wetlands since 1937. DU has conserved more than 54,308 acres in Maryland and invested over \$14.6 million dollars into the state's landscape. We have a committed group of more than 14,550 members in Maryland, many of whom are waterfowl hunters, and all of whom are ardent conservationists. We are deeply committed to expanding Maryland's hunting heritage and conservation ethic.

One of the main provisions of this legislation is its ability to increase the overall funding for conservation through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). By slightly increasing the price of both resident and non-resident hunting licenses for the first time since 1989, the DNR is tapping into increased matching federal funds by 3 to 1 through the Pittman-Robertson Act. A modest, inflation-adjusted price increase will allow the DNR to add roughly \$8 million in license sales and federally matched funds. The additional funding will go straight back to the DNR and allow them to better manage wildlife and their habitats while providing additional opportunities for consumptive recreation in Maryland. As the vast majority of wildlife species that are managed by DNR are non-game, this funding boon will have benefits far outside the hunting community as well. Additionally, increasing the price of the Maryland migratory game bird stamp will provide additional funding for critical waterfowl research and enhancement of waterfowl habitat on public lands in Maryland, benefiting a wide array of bird species, not just waterfowl. Since 1974, stamp sales have provided more than \$7 million for migratory game projects. This price adjustment is consistent with neighboring states around Maryland.

This legislation will also repeal the antiquated colonial prohibition on hunting migratory birds on Sundays during the established seasons. Sportsmen and women often cite "lack of time" as one of the number one reasons they stop hunting. Allowing an extra weekend day to enjoy the outdoors will provide more equitable access and help recruit and retain a robust hunter population that is needed to provide funding for the overall conservation efforts in Maryland. In recent years, several

neighboring states (Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and more) have begun the process of repealing these prohibitions, and to date, there has been no negative consequences on the resource or little to no user-conflict as a result. More than 40 other states across the United States currently offer waterfowl hunting seven days a week during the season with no detrimental impact. We at DU would like to stress that there is zero empirical data to suggest Sunday hunting will negatively impact waterfowl populations or hunter satisfaction. Another provision of this legislation also seeks to allow non-resident individuals enrolled at colleges and universities in Maryland to obtain a hunting license at the resident rate. As evidenced by the other 29 states with this provision already in place, it will help encourage college students to spend time outdoors and support conservation. Data also points to the fact that if people that are college-age are not able to hunt during this time, there is a much lower probability they will continue hunting into the future. This legislation will make every effort to stem that attrition of young people in the outdoors.

Lastly, this legislation will increase Maryland and the DNR's ability to provide robust hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) programs. By establishing the Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program, the DNR will be able to help educate and provide outreach to the public, particularly in historically under-served communities, and foster an interest in outdoor recreation, and wildlife conservation. This will be a historic step for Maryland, and the hunting community at-large, as wide swathes of our society have often been left out of outdoor recreation. This bill will ensure that communities that were not offered access and opportunity to hunting will have the same ability to enjoy Maryland's tremendous natural resources as everyone else. The R3 movement is one that is supported by all 50-state fish and wildlife agencies and has had measurable impacts on the overall number of sportsmen and women as well as increasing societal awareness and support for activities like hunting and fishing.

We at DU are committed to protecting wetlands and waterfowl while simultaneously providing opportunities for hunters from all backgrounds to equitably enjoy the outdoors in Maryland. Senate Bill 327 will do just that with a once in a generation opportunity to drastically increase conservation funding while providing Maryland residents with new and expanded hunting access and opportunity, outreach and education. We want to thank Senator Elfreth and all the co-sponsors for their leadership on this legislation. Thank you Chair, Vice Chair and Committee members for your continuing efforts to protect the wildlife and public lands of Maryland, and for considering supporting this bill. Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Nikki Ghorpade
Government Affairs Manager
Ducks Unlimited

SB327_DNR_SUP_EEE_2-15-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Peditto

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

February 15, 2023

Bill Number: **SB 327**

Short Title: **Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps**

Department's Position: **Support**

Explanation of Department's Position

The Department supports SB 327 because it offers a multi-faceted approach that will enable the Wildlife & Heritage Service (WHS) to allocate more resources to the conservation and management of Maryland's wildlife. The legislation will enable WHS to better reach urban and suburban communities to educate them about the value of the state's natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities, it will create additional hunting opportunities that will help with recruitment and retention of the hunters who fund the majority of wildlife management, and it will provide for a long-needed adjustment to hunting license and stamp fees that have not changed for 30 or more years.

Background Information

Environmental awareness, including the need to conserve our wildlife resources, is at an all-time high and WHS is a leader in promoting this message. The unit currently employs several staff whose primary responsibilities include outreach and education. However, as the state's human population steadily increases, threats to wildlife and other natural resources also increase, causing the need for additional public education. At the same time, there is great value to public health by offering outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting. Creating a specialized outreach and recreation program with dedicated staff will assist WHS in addressing both of these subjects.

Revenue is required to offer outreach programs like ones mentioned above and to manage Maryland's vast wildlife resources. The funds for these activities primarily come from hunting license sales and matching federal grant monies. Thus, recruiting and maintaining hunters is essential to maintaining these funds and for WHS to fulfill its mission. Offering additional hunting opportunities through more lands to hunt, more license options, and more days to hunt (especially weekends) aids significantly with recruiting and retaining hunters. With a resident license available to college students, many of these students will return to Maryland and hunt after graduating. Sunday hunting affords many hunters who work and cannot hunt through the week twice as much time to be in the field, increasing the likelihood that they will remain hunters.

Maryland hunting license and stamp fees have not been significantly adjusted for over 30 years. Adjusting these fees will enable WHS to improve essential services to the public and better fulfill its mission to promote and conserve the state's vast ecological resources. Along with the fee adjustment

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)
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revenue itself, WHS is eligible to receive federal grant monies awarded at a 1:3 ratio through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. This means for every \$1 WHS receives directly in fee adjustments, \$3 in federal grant money is available for conservation-related work. By adjusting hunting license and stamp fees, WHS can receive more federal grant money to further the conservation and outdoor recreation mission. Unfortunately, as it stands now, federal grant money opportunities continue to increase while WHS matching special funds remain stagnant.

It is important to note that hunting license and stamp revenues are not used just for hunting-related activities. WHS is responsible for the management and conservation of all of the State's wildlife resources. Along with approximately one dozen primary game species, WHS manages hundreds of rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals. Hunting license and stamp fees are the primary source of State funding for ensuring the long-term conservation of these species and the native ecosystems and natural communities that are critical to their survival. Adequate funding is needed for WHS to manage and protect these resources in the face of a rapidly growing human population and a changing climate.

WHS also manages 64 public Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) totaling over 125,000 acres throughout the State. These areas are open to the public, free of charge, for wildlife recreation opportunities including hunting, hiking, and wildlife watching. Rapidly increasing operational costs have made it challenging to conduct essential maintenance and habitat management on these WHS lands, which can affect the safety and enjoyment that WMA visitors expect. Additional funding is needed to improve these lands and offer quality experiences for their users.

Bill Explanation

SB 327 creates a conservation education and outdoor recreation program with dedicated staff focused on communities who normally have not accessed such activities. The legislation addresses WHS funding issues by adjusting hunting license and stamp fees, and by improving hunter recruitment and retention programs. SB 327 assists with hunter recruitment efforts in multiple ways, including by offering a resident-priced license to non-resident college students so that they can more easily enjoy Maryland's vast hunting opportunities. SB 327 also assists with hunter recruitment and retention by enabling additional Sunday hunting opportunities for migratory birds. Lastly, recruitment and retention is enhanced by the creation of additional public hunting lands through the use of expanded funding opportunities. SB 327 also creates an avenue for WHS to work cooperatively with the Department of Agriculture to address deer population concerns as they relate to agricultural crop damage.

Elfreth_FAV_SB327 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Elfreth

Position: FAV

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County



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Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety,
Transportation, and Environment

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on
Program Open Space/Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2023

Testimony in Favor of SB0327
Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion,
Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, & members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 327, which updates our hunting and preservation laws with the intended goal of expanding hunting opportunities, controlling deer populations, and preserving land. I am proud of the work and the variety of stakeholders that this legislation has engaged over the past few months, and I am hopeful that this Committee sees this legislation as a thoughtful, well-balanced approach.

On community outreach for hunting and conservation this legislation codifies the current Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach program within DNR. This newly codified program will provide outreach to communities that have historically not had access to hunting and conservation programs as well as further engage veterans as it relates to these activities. (Page 3 Lines 23-28 and Page 4 Lines 1-16)

On hunting license/stamp fees this legislation will, at the request of the hunting community, take a measured approach in increasing the fees to purchase a hunting license/stamp – which have not been raised since 1989. These increases not only keep us on par with our neighboring States but also, by way of Federal Pittman-Robertson Funds, generate approximately an additional \$6.8 million more Federal dollars to our State. This legislation will also grant non-resident students attending in State schools the resident price for the differing licenses/stamps. The increases will still keep Maryland competitive when compared to our neighboring states - Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia all have an average resident cost of

\$67.08 while this legislation proposes an average resident cost of \$53.50. (Page 8 Lines 22-31 and Page 9 Lines 1-20)

On the increased federal funds the State will receive this legislation will:

1. Authorize the use of the increased federal funds to be transferred to the Heritage Conservation Fund to be used to purchase lands that can be used by the General Public for hunting. (Page 3 Lines 21-22 and Page 12 Lines 22-24)
2. Create 8 new pins in the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to further support their outreach efforts. (Page 12 Lines 25-28)
3. Authorize the use of funds to be spent on migratory game bird habitat restoration in Canada – which 36 other States currently do. The legislation will also require a report on the effectiveness of any such expenditures to the General Assembly. (Page 10 Lines 27-30 and Page 11 Lines 4-9)
4. Require DNR to report on any suitable uses for the increased federal funding. (Page 12 Lines 13-14)

On deer and the impact that they continue to have on Marylanders and our farmers this legislation will:

1. Require DNR, in consultation with MDA, to develop a plan to address the overpopulation of deer in the State – including the feasibility of a closure strategy on State parks, State lands, and local lands consultation with our local partners to mitigate deer populations. (Page 12 Lines 1-17)
2. Creates, for the first time, a stamp to hunt Sika Deer (Various pages)

On the liability of private landowners who allow specific individuals, rather than the public at large to hunt on their property this legislation will further clarify [CH523](#) (2022) to ensure that nothing may be construed to:

1. Require a landowner to allow the general public access to the land owners land; and
2. Prohibit a landowner from limiting or posting the landowner's land against entry.

On Sunday hunting for migratory game birds this legislation, as drafted, would authorize the hunting of migratory game birds on Sundays. It is important to note that, based on the seasons for geese and ducks, this would only account for 8 to 10 Sundays a year. However, appreciating that counties and communities are different and after meeting with the Maryland Horse Council, I am proposing the following as a potential amendment that will give our Counties 3 options with regards to this:

1. A County may opt out of this all together and lose that day for the hunting season.
2. A County may choose to only offer Sunday hunting for migratory game birds from 30 minutes before sunrise to 12:00PM.

3. If not explicitly listed as opting out or for a 12:00PM end time, then the County would be granting full Sunday hunting.

This is obviously an omnibus piece of legislation. While there is still work to be done to finesse the Sunday hunting piece, I look forward to working with the Horse Council and local delegations to determine which counties would like to opt-in or opt-out of Sunday hunting of waterfowl.

Once again, I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 327 – and I look forward to hearing from the Committee.

Sincerely,

Sarah Elfreth

SB327_FAV_HSUS.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Boyles Griffin

Position: FAV



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Bill: SB 327
Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
Position: FAVORABLE
Date: February 15, 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our Maryland members and supporters, supports Senate Bill 327. While the bill has multiple components, the most critical part of the legislation is that, by raising hunting license fees a modest amount, the bill would significantly increase funding for Maryland's Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife and Heritage Service, ensuring more resources for wildlife management and conservation funding across the state.

Every dollar the State raises in hunting and trapping license fees is matched by federal funding. Those funds are the primary source of revenue for the State's efforts to restore habitat, conduct scientific research and education, and manage Maryland's wildlife for future generations. However, over the years the number of licenses sold has steadily decreased while license fees have remained the stagnant, and as a result, every year, the State leaves more and more federal matching dollars on the table. Therefore, increasing license fees alone would significantly increase the amount of revenue that the State receives in federal funding to support the work of State's Wildlife and Heritage Service.

The work of the Wildlife and Heritage Service is critical to protect and preserve Maryland's native species and the habitat in which they reside. This bill is not only supported by the Humane Society of the United States but also by a broad coalition of groups, strong evidence of its merit. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 327.

Testimony in Support of MD SB 327 - NDA.pdf

Uploaded by: Torin Miller

Position: FAV



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 162305 · Atlanta, Georgia 30321 · phone: 1-800-209-3337 · DEERASSOCIATION.com

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

14 February, 2023

RE: Support for Maryland Senate Bill 327 – Conservation Funding

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members:

The National Deer Association (NDA) is a national non-profit conservation organization with the mission to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting. We represent 30,000 members nationwide, including hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals. On behalf of the NDA, I am writing to provide our comments in support of Maryland Senate Bill 327 (SB 327) and respectfully ask that the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (Committee) pass the bill for consideration by the full Senate.

SB 327 is a large conservation funding and access package, and the legislation has the ability to significantly impact conservation funding in Maryland, benefiting all Marylanders, including hunters and conservationists, outdoor recreators and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The bill would provide nearly \$9 million annually in additional funding that will go directly into conservation programs all Marylanders care about, while helping open new or expand access for hunters and establishing a better program/division within DNR for expanded and updated hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3). Additionally, the bill includes important provisions to continue to repeal antiquated blue laws preventing sportsmen and women from hunting on Sundays.

The NDA's mission relies on science-based wildlife management decisions and strong conservation funding programs. SB 327 provides both. Specific provisions of the bill we support include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing the price of the resident and non-resident hunting licenses by a few dollars;
- Establishing a sika deer stamp to hunt sika deer;
- Removing the prohibition against hunting waterfowl on Sundays;
- Establishing the "Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program" to provide outdoor recreation, hunting and wildlife conservation education to underserved communities; and
- Allowing non-resident students attending a college or university in Maryland to obtain a hunting license at the resident rate.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Maryland General Assembly on this legislation and similar issues surrounding deer, wildlife habitat, hunting and conservation funding, and we welcome any questions you may have regarding our position on this or similar bills.

Sincerely,

Torin Miller
Senior Director of Policy

Delta Waterfowl_Maryland SB327_Written Testimony_S

Uploaded by: Cyrus Baird

Position: FWA



February 15, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 327 - *Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps*

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf Delta Waterfowl members both in Maryland and across the United States, I am writing to enthusiastically **SUPPORT Senate Bill 327**. This legislation, which represents the culmination of work among Maryland residents, hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, lawmakers and conservation minded individuals, will drastically increase hunting access and opportunity while boosting conservation funding for wildlife and their habitats for all to enjoy across Maryland.

As background, Delta Waterfowl is a leading conservation organization founded at the famed Delta Marsh in Manitoba, Canada, with its United States Headquarters in Bismarck, North Dakota. We have members and supporters all across North America, including thousands in Maryland, who represent waterfowl hunters in all arenas.

Delta Waterfowl works to produce ducks through intensive management programs and conservation of breeding duck habitat while also providing vital waterfowl research, and promoting and protecting the continuing tradition of waterfowl hunting in North America.

While this legislation is truly robust and will greatly impact all wildlife and sportsmen and women of Maryland, for the purposes of this testimony, we would like to highlight just a few of the provisions specifically and provide some additional background to underscore the potential impact.

Increased Conservation Funding

One of the main provisions of this legislation is its ability to drastically increase the overall funding for conservation through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). By slightly increasing the price of the suite of both resident and non-resident hunting licenses for the first time since 1989, the DNR is tapping into increased matching federal funds by 3 to 1 through the Pittman-Robertson Act. This “user-pay” system affectionally called the *American System of Conservation Funding* is the crown jewel model for conservation funding and has been in place for almost a century.

A modest, inflation adjusted price increase will allow the DNR to not only add roughly \$2 million in funding each year, but will allow them to tap into over \$6 million annually through federal matching funds. The



additional funding will go straight back into the core mission of the agency and allow them to better manage wildlife and their habitats while providing additional access and opportunities for the sportsmen and women of Maryland to hunt.

Additionally, increasing the price of the Maryland migratory game bird stamp will provide additional funding for critical waterfowl research and enhancement of waterfowl habitat on public lands in Maryland, as well the breeding grounds of the Prairie Pothole Region. Since 1974, stamp sales have provided more than \$7 million for migratory game projects. This price adjustment is consistent with neighboring states around Maryland including Virginia (\$10) and Delaware (\$15).

Access and Opportunity

This legislation will also repeal the antiquated prohibition on hunting migratory birds on Sundays during the established seasons. Sportsmen and women often cite "lack of time" as one of the number one reasons they stop hunting. Many hunters are prevented from introducing new or novice hunters to the great outdoors because they are competing against work, organized sports and other activities on Saturdays, which is currently their only opportunity to hunt outside of the typical work and school week. Allowing an extra day to access the outdoors will provide equity and also help recruit and retain a robust hunter population that is needed to provide critical funding for the overall conservation efforts in Maryland.

In recent years, several neighboring states (Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and more) have begun the process of repealing these prohibitions, and to date, there has been zero negative consequences on the resource or little to no user-conflict as a result. In Virginia, the Department of Wildlife Resources estimated that there was "no measurable impact" on waterfowl populations with the additional day of hunting – adding that "[duck] harvest on Sundays was comparable to duck harvest occurring on Mondays-Thursdays and about 1/3 that of Saturdays." More than 40 other states across the United States currently offer waterfowl hunting seven days a week during the season with no detrimental impact. Again, it's important to stress that there is zero data to support allowing Sunday hunting will negatively impact waterfowl populations or hunter satisfaction.

Another provision of this legislation also seeks to allow non-resident individuals enrolled at colleges and universities across Maryland to obtain a hunting license under the current resident rate. College-aged sportsmen and women are one of the fastest growing user groups within the hunting community, but often they are limited financially from purchasing licenses outside their home state. Currently, 29 states have implemented legislation allowing non-resident college students to purchase hunting and/or angling licenses at resident prices, with pending legislation in several legislatures across the country.

Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation

Lastly, this legislation will increase Maryland and the DNR's ability to provide robust hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) programs. By establishing the *Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program*, the DNR will be able to help educate and provide outreach to the public, particularly under-served communities, and foster an interest in outdoor recreation, stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation.



The R3 movement is one that is widely supported by all 50-state fish and wildlife agencies, and has had measurable impacts on the overall number of sportsmen and women as well as increasing societal awareness and support for activities like hunting and fishing.

In closing, Senate Bill 327 will provide Maryland with a once in a generation opportunity to drastically increase conservation funding for the DNR while providing Maryland residents with new and expanded hunting access and opportunity, outreach and education. We want to thank Senator Elfreth for her leadership on this legislation, as well as the co-sponsors. We look forward to working with this committee and the rest of the General Assembly as it works its way through the legislative process. We respectfully ask that you support the bill.

Respectfully,

Cyrus Hunter Baird

Cyrus Hunter Baird
Senior Director of Government Affairs
Delta Waterfowl Foundation

CC:

The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler
Paul Peditto, Director, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

SB 327 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jacob Holtz

Position: FWA

TO: Sen. Brian Feldman and the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support with Amendments to SB 497

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members,

I write today to support Senate Bill 327 with amendments. This bill would modify the licensing system for hunting and trapping and increase funding available to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). While I support the overall intention of this bill, I would like to see it amended as I describe below.

The DNR is responsible for managing our State's wildlife resources and relies a great deal on license revenue to do so. The increase to license fees is long overdue as it has been far too long since license fees have changed and as we all know, costs for the government to do its job have gone up just as costs for all of us in every aspect of our lives have gone up. The DNR needs additional funding simply to provide the same level of service. Furthermore, I believe that hunters across the State will ultimately see the benefit of increasing funding. My hope is that DNR will use the additional funds to find ways to provide additional hunting opportunities. States in the West have programs such as Block Management Areas, or Walk-In Hunting Areas, which provide private landowners compensation for allowing the general public access to hunt the property. Such a program would be incredibly welcomed here in Maryland.

While I support the intention of this bill, I do hope that it gets amended in two specific ways. First, all other license holder groups are seeing increases to their fees but for seniors. Seniors already pay a nominal fee compared to other license holders. Leaving the senior license at \$5 while other resident license holder groups (including youth) see license increases of at least 40% simply isn't fair. A commensurate increase would put the senior license at \$9. Rounding up to a round number would be \$10. Many people spend that much on gas just getting to their hunting grounds and back. It isn't too much to ask to increase the senior license by \$5, especially as many hunters continue to age into that license bracket.

Second, I love the creation of the sika deer stamp but the nonresident sika deer stamp needs to be more expensive. Free range, wild sika deer are an incredibly unique resource to our State and their pursuit has exploded in popularity over the last number of years. Folks come from all over the East Coast and further to pursue these marsh ghosts. Providing an open access, come-one, come-all opportunity for nonresidents to hunt sika deer is incredibly generous. Out West, unique opportunities like this are often managed by draw systems, limiting nonresidents to specific numbers to provide enhanced opportunities for residents. Furthermore, license fees for such unique opportunities are often in the neighborhood of 25:1 nonresident:resident (such as in Montana - \$959 for a nonresident elk/deer license vs. \$36 for a resident elk/deer license). I don't believe we need to increase license fees by that much for nonresidents, but \$25 is simply not enough to really capture the value offered by our great State to nonresidents.

Again, I want to reiterate my support for the overall intention of Senate Bill 327 and I sincerely hope to see it amended as I have described to further fund DNR's activities to conserve, protect, and enhance the management of our State's wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Jacob Holtz

SB0327 HCC Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: James Klauber

Position: FWA



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Office of the President

**Hagerstown Community College
Senate Bill 327 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
2/15/2023**

**Testimony Submitted by
Dr. James Klauber**

Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, thank you for accepting my testimony on Senate Bill 327. Hagerstown Community College is in support of this legislation.


As a hunter, outdoorsman, and enthusiast of sound wildlife management, who happens to serve as a college president, this is a very good bill. Specifically, I support the provision to allow nonresident college students to obtain an inresident hunting permit with their college identification card.

With the loss of natural predators, hunting wild game allows for its populations to be contained to a reasonable level. I am afraid there are not enough hunters to get the job done these days. Chronic Wasting Disease in deer is a serious problem caused principally by overpopulation. We need to educate a new generation of hunters to strike a necessary balance in deer population. This bill opens the opportunity to not only recruit students from other states, but to educate them on the value, fun, and excitement that hunting creates.

As an addition, it might be time to address the movement of wild boar into the region. I am not aware that Maryland has any provisions for hunting wild hogs. This invasive species wreaks havoc on agricultural operations across much of the Southern United States. They are gradually moving into Western Maryland. While the current populations are very low, they are in all of our neighboring states, and they multiply rapidly. We need to do a better job of promoting hunting and killing of these animals within our gaming community.

Thank you for your work on this valuable legislation. If I can provide any further assistance or information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,


Dr. James Klauber
President

testimony - sunday hunting waterfowl.pages.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FWA



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee, February 15, 2023

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 327

Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management,
Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Favorable with Amendment

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We stand for over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

POSITION

The Horse Council supports SB 327, if amended to remove the provision opening Sundays to migratory game bird hunting, and to make clear that any plan for deer population control developed pursuant to SECTION 2 of the bill will not permit Sunday hunting on state park system lands.

The Maryland Horse Council supports and applauds many of the provisions in SB 327, including the increase in fees and especially the creation of the Wildlife Conservation Education and Outreach Program. Since the onset of the Pandemic, interest and participation in outdoor activities have skyrocketed, and increased opportunities for education about and access to outdoor experiences of all types, including hiking, birdwatching, trail riding and hunting, is an important goal.

We oppose one provision, however - the change to Section 10-410 of the Natural Resources Article **that will allow Sunday Hunting of migratory game** birds (see page 11, line 28). In recent years, there have been several bills that attempted to allow Sunday hunting of migratory game birds. All were “stand alone” bills; and all have failed.

We also have concerns about SECTION 2 of the bill, which directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), a plan to address the “overpopulation of deer in the state.” “The plan shall include: (1) the feasibility of implementing **a rotational closure hunting strategy on State land, including State park system lands and hunting on State land on Sundays.**”

None of our sources inside or outside DNR have been able to explain what “a rotational closure hunting strategy” is, and we are concerned that it implies a plan for Sunday closure of some or all state park system lands, to allow hunting - which is currently forbidden. Closing State parks to the general public on Sundays is just a really bad idea.

The horse industry in Maryland is a large, engaged and thriving constituency, and a strong economic engine: 28,000 direct equine related jobs; 16,000 properties occupying over 705,000 acres (almost 10% of Maryland’s total land area, and over 25% of Maryland’s agricultural land) The industry represents \$2.1 billion in annual economic impact, generating \$78 million in annual tax revenue. Trail riders are the largest interest group among Maryland riders, according to a recent survey by the Equiery magazine.¹ There are more horses per square mile in Maryland than in any state in the Union. (See attached fact sheet.) There are hundreds to thousands of horses in every county in the state.² Thus, legislative actions that affect the equine industry have a broad economic effect. While the Fiscal Note for this bill is not yet available, Fiscal Notes on prior bills proposing Sunday hunting of migratory game birds concluded that the economic impact would be “minimal” or not material.

Passage of this bill at this time does not seem to make sense, given that the federal government reduced bag limits and season length for Canada geese and mallards in recent years due to significant declines in bird populations. According to the recently released DNR Midwinter Waterfowl Survey Results for 2023, total populations of waterfowl along the Chesapeake Bay, Potomac River and Atlantic Coastline have declined precipitously since 2018, and the Canada Goose population has declined by half.³ Moreover some waterfowl hunters and outfitters believe that seven day a week hunting is deleterious because too much hunting pressure on waterfowl drives the birds away, an effect that can last for years.⁴

It is important to make clear that the Horse Council is not opposed to hunting. Many of our members are hunters of deer, other game mammals, and game birds.

¹ <http://equiery.com/trail-riding-tops-reader-survey/>

² According to the 2010 Maryland Equine Census (current numbers are likely about 25% higher, based on current total statewide population): Allegany 350; Baltimore 8950; Carroll 6050; Frederick 7850; Garrett 1500; Harford 6200; Howard 4350; Montgomery 7900; Washington 3750; Anne Arundel 4500; Calvert 1350; Charles 1750; Prince George’s 7100; Saint Mary’s 2300; Caroline 1300; Cecil 6200; Kent 1200; Queen Anne’s 1700; Talbot 1500; Dorchester 350; Somerset 270; Wicomico 1800; Worcester 880

³ Total waterfowl in 2018: 1,023,300, in 2023: 632,000. Canada Geese in 2018: 641,000, in 2023: 320,800.

⁴ <https://www.ducks.org/hunting/waterfowl-hunting-tips/waterfowlers-notebook-managing-hunting-pressure>

For more than 20 years, **the Maryland Horse Council has worked to ensure fair use of shared natural resources during hunting seasons**, by seeking to preserve Sundays as the one day of the week when children and adults who are hikers, birdwatchers, dog walkers, trail riders and other outdoor enthusiasts could enjoy the outdoors without concern for adverse interactions with hunters. Now we are facing a statewide bill that would allow all day Sunday hunting for waterfowl - currently not allowed at all anywhere in the state, on virtually every Sunday from September through early March and in some cases, mid-April.

The issue of recreational Sunday hunting is certainly a fraught one. In a November 2018 independent **Gonzales statewide poll**, the vast majority of respondents opposed Sunday hunting:

SUNDAY HUNTING Oppose 68.9%; Favor 21.9%

Breakdown:

Strongly Favor 13.5%

Somewhat Favor 8.4%

Somewhat Oppose 15.4%

Strongly Oppose 53.5%

These majorities opposed to Sunday hunting hold true in Baltimore Metro, Washington Metro AND Rural areas. Rural Maryland opposed Sunday hunting 60.5% vs 34.1% in favor.

It is also **sometimes argued that recreational hunters need Sundays** because they and their children have other things to do on Saturdays - a situation that plainly applies to most of Maryland's users of outdoor resources, be they hunters, birdwatchers, dog walkers, mountain bikers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and trail riders. So why should one group get special consideration - especially since, as the fiscal note shows, there is no significant economic benefit? Where is the balancing of the public good?

The number of licensed hunters in Maryland, fewer than 100,000, is just about 2% of the state's overall population of about 6 million. In 2014, the Horse Council conducted a statewide survey on Sunday hunting. **68% of respondents ride on trails on public or private land one or more days a week. And, perhaps most significantly, 85% said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters. In the Gonzales poll, 78% of respondents said they would change their plans to avoid encountering hunters.**

The Sunday hunting provision of this bill would further infringe on the rights of other users of our shared natural resources in Maryland, especially since **many riders ride around the edges of harvested crop land, which attracts migratory birds.**

The Maryland Horse Council has proposed reasonable compromises that would still allow fair use of shared natural resources, by cutting off Sunday hunting, where allowed, at **10:30 am**. This would allow hunters to hunt at favorable hours, yet still give trail riders and others plenty of Sunday access to the outdoors. This compromise has been embraced by some legislators, who have praised the Horse Council for this reasonable approach, and it has now been adopted by several counties.

We of course recognize that private land owners have some right to decide what uses they want to allow on their land. But such rights have never been absolute, as any review of zoning and

land use rules can plainly establish. And, as a practical matter the public/private land distinction affords little relief since public and private tracts are often relatively small, non-contiguous, intertwined and rarely well-marked. In our survey, referenced above, 56% of respondents said they ride on trails that cross both public and private land.

We have one additional concern: Section 2 of the bill (page 11, line 29 and page 12, lines 1-17), requires DNR, in consultation with MDA, to develop a plan to address deer overpopulation in the State. The plan “shall include” **“the feasibility of implementing a rotational closure hunting strategy on State land, including State park system lands and hunting on State land on Sundays.”** None of our sources inside or outside DNR have been able to explain what “a rotational closure hunting strategy” is, and we are concerned that it implies a plan for closure of some or all state park system lands to allow for Sunday hunting - which is currently forbidden.

Since the advent of the pandemic, widespread use of outdoor recreation and natural resources by the general public has only increased. For example, **attendance at Maryland State Parks in 2020 increased 45% over 2019, which was also a record year. Demand has remained strong. Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, including the distinctions between private and public lands.** In 2021, Lt. Governor Rutherford stated: “With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic changing the way we live, work, and play, more and more Marylanders are finding affordable, socially-distant, and family-friendly recreation opportunities at our parks and public lands.” Now is not the time to increase general public exposure to possible hunting risks, or to further deter the public from outdoor recreation.

Moreover, the deer population is in decline - down to about 200,000 from a high of 300,00. In a February 2022 press release, DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Paul Peditto stated “the deer population is trending toward a population level that reduces damage to agriculture and minimizes impacts on our natural communities.”

CONCLUSION

We urge the Committee to remove the provision opening Sundays to migratory game bird hunting, make clear that Sunday hunting in State Park System lands remains forbidden, and then favorably report SB 327.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)
info@mdhorsecouncil.org

The Maryland Horse Industry

Why Does It Matter?

51% of Maryland households contain at least one horse enthusiast
Maryland has 10.5 horses per square mile, more than any other state



1. Economic Impact

\$2.1 billion annual economic impact

\$80 million spent on hay, feed, and straw

\$78 million in tax revenue

2. Open Space

Over 25% of agricultural land in horse use

88,000 acres in permanent preservation

Land conserved with private dollars



3. Tourism

Four international competition venues

\$___ generated in Prince George's County

Three internationally televised events

4. Health and Wellness

40 therapeutic riding programs

10,000 children served by educational programs

\$8.4 million economic impact



5. Jobs

>28,000 industry jobs

200 equine organizations

16,000 horse farms and stables

Data source: Maryland Horse Industry Board
Copyright (c) 2022 Maryland Horse Council

2023_SB_320.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Webster

Position: FWA



February 14, 2023

Senate Department of Education, Energy and the Environment
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 320

Dear Chairman, Vice Chairman and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Association for Wildlife Conservation (MAWC). MAWC is an umbrella organization founded in Maryland in 1976, for sporting groups who use beagles, bassets, foxhounds, and other scent hounds in sporting endeavors, both mounted and unmounted (also referred to as Maryland's chasing community). MAWC represents over a dozen clubs with more than 1,000 members throughout our great state.

MAWC and the chasing community, at large, have been actively represented on the Wildlife Advisory Commission many times over the last several decades, most recently by The Honorable Joseph Michael from Boonsboro. Judge Michael was appointed by Governor Martin O' Malley in 2013, again by Governor Larry Hogan in 2019, and served until required to resign his seat last March, upon being named a Circuit Court Judge of Washington County.

Maryland's chasing community forms a significant portion of Maryland's active recreational and sporting wildlife activity participants. Now that a proposal is being made to specifically designate seats on the Commission, our organization feels it is important that our continued representation be codified.

Pursuant to this, we respectfully request that SB 320 be amended as follows:

On page 2, Lines 9 et seq.:

- C. ~~THE WILDLIFE PRESERVATION-CONSERVATION COMMUNITY; AND~~
- D. THE PASSIVE WILDLIFE RECREATION COMMUNITY; AND
- E. THE MOUNTED AND UNMOUNTED CHASING COMMUNITIES.

With the above amendments, MAWC requests a favorable report on SB 320.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Sponseller Webster
Association Manager
Maryland Association for Wildlife Conservation (MAWC)

Sunday Hunting Letters.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Heller

Position: FWA

Sara Roe Dion
229 River Rd
Chestertown, MD 21620

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, would adversely affect our lifestyle here. My family and I are avid hunters but we look forward to the rest on Sunday so that we may take our kids out hiking or exploring without running into or disturbing hunters. Additionally, as committed members of Ducks Unlimited, we are concerned at what the pressure of no break hunting might do to our migratory bird population down the line, especially considering the proposed increase of bag limits and a longer season. We can see no reason why Sunday hunting for migratory birds makes sense. As a farm owner and lifelong resident of the state of Maryland, I urge you to not pass this into law.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Sara Roe Dion

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, would have an adverse effect for the following reasons. - Lack of access to private and public lands for personal enjoyment on Sundays without the fear of running into hunters (especially for families or hikers/walkers or equestrians)

- The overall hunting pressure of 7 consecutive days for numerous weeks will diminish the overall success of hunters
- Sunday is not only God's day, but a day of much needed rest of gunfire for property owners and neighboring property owners
- Lack of increased license sales and hunter participation in other states that have allowed Sunday hunting

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,
Thomas Marvel

Adam S Hock
100 North Cross Street
Chestertown MD, 21620

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, would adversely affect our hunting season as a whole. It will increase hunting pressure on this valuable waterfowl resource making it harder for its recovery and sustainability we as a community have worked hard to protect. Sunday hunting would also limit access to some areas frequented by hunters including landowners, bike and horse riders and nature enthusiasts of all kinds. I am a hunter myself, while I enjoy hunting and look forward to passing this tradition down to my son I enjoy taking him and my wife on walks on Sundays without fear of a stray shot coming our way.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Adam S Hock

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King

The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

David Scofield, DVM, MS, DACT
13063 Still Pond Road
Still Pond, MD 21667
davidscofield@selectbreeders.com

February 12th, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting would adversely affect the overall health of the waterfowl population by increasing hunting pressure and negating a rest day that these populations need during the season. Additionally, use of many of the state lands, parks, and preserves that allow for equestrian riding and trail recreation either on foot or with horses cannot be safely used while hunting is occurring. No one should be on horseback where unexpected firearm use could spook the animal and potentially harm the rider. Many of my clients rely on the Sundays to explore the states parks and equestrian facilities, and as a valued group of tax payers, Sunday waterfowl hunting should be removed from this bill.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

David Scofield, DVM, MS, DACT

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfireth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King

The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

Hugh M Smith

27525 Westpoint Rd
Easton, Maryland 21601
hsmith@cbchesapeake.com

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

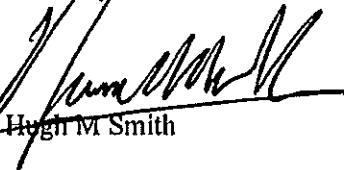
Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. I am a 68 year-old native of Talbot County and have been an avid hunter since the age of 12. Migratory waterfowl populations using Talbot County tributaries of Chesapeake Bay are a shadow of what they once were. I can recall seeing several thousand Canada Geese resting on the waters of Paper Mill Pond outside Easton. This month the population is approximately 50-75 birds. I rarely see ducks anymore. Waterfowl populations are under relentless pressure – especially from Outfitters and Guides catering to out-of-state hunters. A large number of my peers (local landowners) have given-up water fowling entirely out of respect for the natural environment and the economic costs that its erasure would incur. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting would put further pressure on migratory waterfowl and hasten the day that the Canada Goose, the black Duck, the Red Head and many other already over-stressed and declining species are gone entirely. Please don't take the one day of rest that migratory populations enjoy, purely to benefit a relatively small industry and to raise more revenue for the DNR.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,



Hugh M Smith

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion

The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps
Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:
This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, would adversely affect duck populations, as well as our hunting in general. In addition, Sunday has always been a day of rest for the birds as well as a chance for non-hunters to use multi-use areas or other properties used by hunters on normal hunting days. As a lifelong Maryland resident and a native eastern shoreman who has been hunting since the age of 10, that's 34 years now, I wholeheartedly oppose Sunday duck hunting. Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,
Ben Herr
200 Greenhouse Lane
Chestertown MD 21620
brherr30@gmail.com
410-708-5823

cc:The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester

The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

Dear Senator Feldman,

My name is Aubrey Barto and I am an Eastern Shore resident, hunter, fisher, conservationist, and biologist. I've worked as a hunting and fishing guide, a field biologist for NOAA, and a commercial fisherman. I am writing with regard to Senate Bill 0327. Specifically, I'd like to discuss the included provisions for Sunday waterfowl hunting. It is my opinion that this would be detrimental to the health of our migratory population as well as the effective management of these species. Further, there are many stakeholders that use these public resources, that do not hunt. For example, equestrians, hikers, ornithologists, and field naturalists enjoy a day during the weekend with no hunting pressure. If Sunday hunting was permitted, the pressure/effort would vastly increase and effective management of said ssp would be hobbled by an incomprehensible increase in take, and subsequent reduction of biomass.

I do not take issue with the other provisions within the bill. Therefore, I am in support of Bill 0327, with Amendment. Thank you for your time and I hope you consider my position.

Kind Regards,
Aubrey Barto

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps
Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:
This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I am writing this letter of support with amendment to committee chairman Brian Feldman who has introduced SB0327. There are many good things in the bill but there is one item that I am strictly opposed to and that is the introduction of Sunday Hunting. I am concerned by introducing Sunday hunting in conjunction with the proposed increase of hunting days for geese and bag limits for both geese and ducks that we could fall back to a moratorium status in just a short period of time. I would ask that the committee take a step back and really evaluate this bill and see the harm it could have on hunters and their overall success in the field.

Thank you

Geoff Dulin

cc:The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester

The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327**/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

The one exception that I take with the bill as drafted is the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, creates the following adverse effects:

- 7 consecutive days each week of hunting over the 60-day hunting season will place extra pressure on the State's already fragile waterfowl resources. Birds do not like pressure and the fact that many weekend hunters will now be able to concentrate their efforts on two days in a row of hunting and have a negative impact on the annual "harvest." Spreading Maryland waterfowling out over a 6 day period each week allows enjoyment for the whole population, including those seniors who have waited for their well earned retirement to enjoy the other hunting days besides the weekends.
- Diminish the use of private and public lands for outdoor recreation on Sundays if it requires overlapping with hunters.
- Sunday is not only the Lord's Day, but a day of much needed rest for property owners and their neighbors especially from gunfire in the early morning and late afternoon.

Therefore, I submit my **Support with Amendment to SB0327**, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

John E. Deford, III
Chestertown, MD

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

Dear Chairman Feldman,

We are concerned about the bill to be introduced by your committee with a major issue. Sunday hunting is very disturbing to us as we have experienced a trespass on Sunday hunting just recently and am greatly concerned that not only would the birds not have a day of rest, but neither would we! The one peaceful day of the week during hunting season was shattered by gunshots before the Sun had even made the horizon. It was very disturbing, and my grandchildren were truly afraid.

Our whole family loves to walk about on Sundays without fear of being shot at by mistake. I used to ride horses and I cannot imagine not having a single day of the week where one would not be afraid of getting shot.

We also have other concerns. With many states now allowing hunting on Sundays it would be expected that out-of-state hunters would come down to hunt for a whole weekend.

We wonder just how accurate the counts are for the birds themselves to allow another day of hunting. We can visibly see that there are far fewer ducks than last year. With Avian Influenza we do not know what the immediate future will be for all birds.

We understand that there has been no increase in license sales with increased days of hunting in other states.

And finally, we find that even with hunting, you consider the main Holy day for many people will be just another day for you who vote for this.

I (Barbara) am not sure how I feel about college students getting the same privilege as a resident. I see no reason why they could not get an out-of-state license. We both feel there should be special benefits for residents.

We thank you for considering this. We would probably have more to say, but we only found out about this today.

Barbara B. Cheyney and Curtis P. Cheyney, III

7431 Maple Grove Road

Chestertown, MD 21620

610-896-8113

Thomas Lloyd
4200 Rosemary St
Chevy Chase, MD
20815
thomasblloyd@hotmail.com

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting would adversely affect conservation efforts set forth for rebuilding the fragile waterfowl population.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

Richard Budden
24179 Walnut Point Road
Chestertown, Md 21620
rbudden@easternshoremde.com

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 0327/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for Senate Bill 0327, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, would adversely affect our family taking a hike and running into hunters, we also need a day off from 6 days of shooting.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to SB0327, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Richard Budden

cc: The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Jason C. Gallion
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

02.14.23 Senate Bill 327, Hunting, Wildlife Conser

Uploaded by: Tonya Thomas

Position: FWA



The County Commissioners of Kent County
Ronald H. Fithian, President | Albert H. Nickerson, Member | John F. Price, Member
Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator | Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney

February 14, 2023

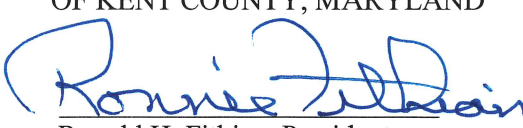
The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

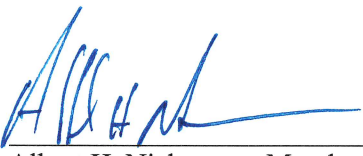
RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT Senate Bill 327 / Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

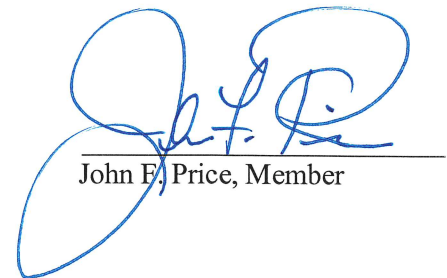
Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

We, the County Commissioners of Kent County, Maryland, support Senate Bill 327 / Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps with an exception. The Board is opposed to Sunday hunting however offers support with an amendment that removes that provision.

Sincerely,
THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND


Ronald H. Fithian, President


Albert H. Nickerson., Member


John F. Price, Member

cc: The County Commissioners of Kent County
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs
The Honorable Steven J. Arentz
The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist

sunday hunt letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Webb Johnson

Position: FWA

Webb Johnson
6586 Kings Grant Lane
Chestertown, MD 21620

February 14, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

My name is Webb Johnson. I am here to represent as the Vice President of the Maryland Outfitters and Guides' Association as well as the President of Quaker Neck Outfitters.

I am here to testify regarding SB0327/HB983. We understand the need for more funding for Maryland's DNR, Wildlife and Heritage and Natural Resource Police via increase in licensing, stamps, and the addition of the new Sitka stamp. However, we are against the hunting of migratory game birds on Sundays. Sunday waterfowl hunting would have a limited to no effect on license sales and recruitment.

The latest state to utilize the Sunday waterfowl hunting was Virginia in 2013. Their statistics reflect only a year or two of increased to flat license sales (USFW) before they continued their downward trends. To-date, the license holders (USFW) have decreased by 46,000 since 2013.

The increase in hunting pressure has led to the decrease of Canadian Geese wintering in Maryland and the hardest to quantify. One concern would be the maturing of the Canadian Geese hunting. We have noticed very few sanctuary areas for these birds to sit unmolested. Very few farms (large or small) with or without ponds in the primary goose zones are not being hunted.

Unfortunately, a majority of our tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay are no longer considered safe resting areas as unsuccessful hunters now rally birds continuously. If I had the time, I would have created a "heat map" that would show the massive number of hunting blinds located in the goose zones.

Creating a continuous 41 +/- day goose/duck season combined with maximum hunter pressure without any days off (Sundays) would hasten the northerly retreat of our beloved Canadian Geese and ducks.

The recently released 2023 Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey conducted by Maryland DNR showed a decrease of 40,000 in the bird population despite the reported increase in the mated bird count. Many geese can now be seen migrating back north before the end of January due to

hunter pressure. Exception to this would be if there was a heavy snow and ice to block their northerly progression, which is increasingly uncommon these days.

Increased pressure/harvest would mean less movement, less opportunity, less hunter recruitment, less license/stamp sales, and the bottom line would mean less income for the Wildlife and Heritage Services. This would also mean less Canadian Geese in Maryland. This will force higher and early monetary contributions supporting DNR from Maryland's General Fund.

Our organizations support SB 327/HB983 with an Amendment deleting the Sunday hunting of Migratory Game Birds.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely

Webb Johnson

SB327_Thompson_Opposed.pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Thompson

Position: UNF

February 15, 2023

Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

Senate Bill 327 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Position: **OPPOSED**

This letter represents the views of the undersigned waterfowl hunters and club members, outfitters and conservationists on Maryland's Eastern Shore. We opposed Senate Bill 327 based on the provision allowing waterfowl hunting in Maryland on Sundays. The Eastern Shore of Maryland was once considered the Goose Capital of the World but overhunting led to the decline of Canada Goose populations to the point of a six-year moratorium on hunting in the 1990's.

The 2019-2020 season was cut to one-bird per day for 30 days due to consecutive years of a bad hatch in Canada precipitated by weather. Situations beyond our control, such as weather, impacting goose populations compounded by hunting pressure make managing the Canada Goose population on the Eastern Shore a delicate balance. The DNR mid-winter waterfowl survey in 2018 counted 641,000 Canada Geese. In 2019, that number was 250,000 and in 2023 still only 320,000. The population cannot sustain the additional hunting pressure that Sundays would result in.

It may come as a surprise that avid hunters and those of us who earn a living guiding hunting parties are opposed to Sunday hunting. The fiscal note even states it would result in increased revenue for our clubs and businesses. But that is short-sighted. We are interested in the long-term sustainability of waterfowl populations in Maryland so that we have a business and hunting tradition to pass down to the next generation.

It is no surprise that the disproportionate amount of waterfowl are harvested on Saturdays compared to weekdays. Sunday hunting coupled with the 2023-2024 proposed bag limits for Canada Geese and Mallard ducks doubling and an extended season will inevitably result in exponentially higher harvest than the species cannot support.

Outfitters are waterfowl managers and conservationists. We provide food and safe roost for waterfowl species. Outfitters and hunting guides likely know more about the populations and movement of waterfowl than anyone else in the state because that is our business. It is worth noting that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources did not consult or even notify the outfitter community before supporting this legislation. There has not been an in-person public comment session on the waterfowl season since 2019 and close to zero input solicited or considered from the waterfowl outfitter community and the hunters we support.

The fact that other states have Sunday waterfowl hunting is irrelevant to whether or not Maryland should allow Sunday hunting. Maryland was the Goose Capital of the world because of our unique geography as home to the Chesapeake Bay and all its tributaries; as well as farmland, providing a much needed food source and a safe haven for Canada Geese and other waterfowl. Adding Sunday hunting and overhunting will put us right back in the moratorium of the 1990's.

Not only do we know waterfowl best, we also know the hunters, we are the hunters! We hunt and guide hunters daily, year after year. Adding Sunday hunting is not going to sell more hunting licenses. The same people who hunt now both will continue to hunt.

Decisions about hunting seasons and bag-limits should be based on science and what is best for the species, not purely hunter opportunity and desire.

We ask for your unfavorable vote on Senate Bill 327.

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