



# Maryland Forests Association, Inc.

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*Maryland's voice for forest, wildlife, and natural resource management*

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
The Honorable Cheryl Kagen, Vice-Chair  
Maryland Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB824- Worcester County- Natural Resources Hunting

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Forests Association is a membership-driven, non-profit association that represents the forest community statewide. We are Maryland's voice for forest, wildlife, and natural resource management. A large portion of the membership is comprised of family forest landowners and hunt clubs.

There are many threats to forests that act gradually and cumulatively and over time that are changing the health, composition, and resilience of our forests. Deer have a large impact on forest diversity. Studies show that deer damage from understory browse eliminates preferred species such as oak and hickory. Populations of white-tail deer have risen dramatically in response to a lack of natural predators and protective game laws. The increase in deer population across the state has led to a severe loss of the forest understory which will have implications for the future forest. In rural areas such as Worcester county, fencing deer out, or trying to shelter trees across large tracts isn't feasible. However, resolving the threat of deer damage by allowing hunters to have more opportunities is a simple resolution to maintaining forest diversity.

In closing, our forests are our greatest renewable resource, but sometimes do need intervention to keep them productive and healthy. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB824.

Thank you, and please feel free to contact me, Beth Hill, at 410-463-1755 or via email at [beth@mdforests.org](mailto:beth@mdforests.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth D. Hill  
Executive Director, Maryland Forests Association