



## MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411  
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 8, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.  
Re: Natural Resources - Female Deer Hunting Contests – Authorization – SB 779 - Oppose

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 give an unfavorable report on Natural Resources - Female Deer Hunting Contests – Authorization – SB 779.

This bill would authorize the Department of Natural Resources to allow a person, for the management of the deer population in the State, to sponsor, conduct, or participate in a certain contest in the State that has the objective of harvesting a female deer.

Killing does for prize money is neither humane nor effective. Studies have shown that when there is an attempt to reduce deer population by culling a deer heard, the remaining female deer reproduce responding to greater food abundance often having twins or even triplets. This high reproductive rate can offset the declines in their population. Moreover, the fawns born into this environment can have higher survival rates and earlier onset of sexual maturity. More deer move in from surrounding communities with the availability of food and fertile does. The result is a quick "bounce-back" in numbers that rarely solves the problems of communities and the deer population.

In 2021, Maryland made it clear that killing certain furbearing animals for prize money is cruel and inconsistent with reputable hunting and unacceptable in Maryland. This approach feels similar. Marylanders have other days and seasons to hunt deer in our state which they have done for hundreds of years without the need for contests or prizes. If Maryland wants to deal with the issue of deer overpopulation, then that issue needs to be investigated with the Department of Natural Resources and the Wildlife Advisory Commission along with research by scientists and wildlife experts.

In closing, I would like to ask the committee for an unfavorable report on SB 779.