

**Webb Johnson  
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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