



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

February 15, 2023

THE HONORABLE BRIAN FELDMAN Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee HONORABLE MEMBERS

**RE: SUPPORT, WITH AMENDMENTS, SENATE BILL 320 (Natural Resources – Wildlife
Advisory Commission -- Membership)**

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite almost 100% of all wildlife management and research costs through their purchase of hunting licenses, stamps and equipment. For the record, hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists.

https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/introduction_to_american_conservation_funding_.pdf

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

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND support Senate Bill 320 – with amendments --b/c wildlife belong to no one person, wildlife belongs to the citizenry...so says the Public Trust Doctrine. Diverse individuals, groups and organizations, who want a broader advisory voice in how Maryland's DNR manages wildlife, is a good thing and should be afforded every opportunity. As Theodore Roosevelt said, "Wildlife cannot speak for itself, so we must and we will." Clearly, Roosevelt's message resonates with everyone interested in and supportive of sound wildlife management science.

Re the amendments: we respectfully request the following: (1) the Commission's membership be increased to 10 b/c Board Chairs – throughout Maryland State Government – do not vote, hence, 10 Members will allow for a majority vote; (2) there's no need to include the "fishing community" representation in WAC b/c there are already two existing fishing advisory groups in Maryland under DNR – Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission and the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission – neither of which have hunters per se as respective members; and (3) existing law -- § 1-102 of the Natural Resources Article (Maryland Annotated Code) – states the Governor is authorized to appointment a WAC Member representative who "promotes the preservation of wildlife" so not sure why there's a need to reiterate it again, aka "THE WILDLIFE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY"

Respectfully submitted,

William R. Miles