



To: House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: House Bill 188 – An Act Concerning Natural Resources - Wildlife Advisory
Commission - Membership**

Position: Oppose

Date: February 9, 2023

Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Joseph Mullin, and I am the Northeastern States Manager for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF). **I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 188 (H. 188)** – legislation that would detrimentally alter the composition of the Wildlife Advisory Commission. It is our firm assertion that the Commission has more than upheld its honorable duties set forth by statute. We therefore do not feel there is a need to reform the composition of the Commission, especially when doing so would potentially grant anti-sportsmen several seats at the Commission’s table. Ultimately, this may lead to obstructionist behavior and slow the rulemaking process with which the Commission is charged.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

For more than 80 years, sportsmen and women have been the primary funders of state-level conservation efforts in the United States and are thus an important constituency that provides benefits for all Marylanders. This funding mechanism, the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF), is a “user pays – public benefits” structure, in which those who consumptively use public resources foot the bill for conservation efforts that benefit all residents. In 2021 alone, Maryland’s sportsmen and women generated more than \$25 million dollars for conservation through revenue derived from license sales and excise taxes on sporting-related goods through the ASCF. It is indisputable that sportsmen and women are the driving force behind funding for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and it is therefore proper that representatives of this demographic provide insight and guidance to the DNR Secretary.

As noted previously, it is our assertion that H. 188 is unwarranted. The Commissioners are meeting the requirements set forth by statute and fulfilling their assigned duties, which includes providing guidance to the DNR Secretary – an objective successfully fulfilled as evidenced by the ongoing discussions held during the Commission meetings. The

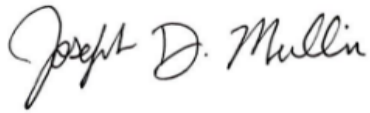
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Commission itself is composed of selfless individuals who often exceed the requisite qualifications for their positions. Through reserving two seats for the “wildlife preservation community” and the “passive wildlife recreation community,” H. 188 makes no attempt to hide the fact that the Commission will include those who are opposed to consumptive-use practices, which will strengthen their efforts against conservation by implementing preservationist ideals. Should H. 188 be enacted, individuals with anti-sportsmen sentiments would be granted complete ease of access to impede pro-hunting, angling, and trapping regulations.

For the above-mentioned reasons, H. 188 is an unnecessary piece of legislation that only serves to strengthen the anti-sportsmen’s community’s efforts in thwarting the implementation of needed conservation regulations; **therefore, we encourage you to oppose this bill.** Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



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