

MD House Bill 983 SCI Testimony_FINAL.pdf

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Position: FAV



1 March 2023

Re: Support for House Bill 983

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee,

Safari Club International (SCI) supports House Bill 983 which, as you know, would provide a tremendous increase in conservation funding for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) while also significantly increasing access and opportunities for both experienced and beginner sportsmen and women.

SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide, and we are respectfully seeking your leadership in supporting this important conservation bill. The provisions within House Bill 983 provide unique opportunities for Maryland to further its strong hunting heritage, foster the next generation of sportsmen and women, increase habitat management and infrastructure improvement to public lands, and grow research and understanding of various game species. All told, the modest fee increases in the legislation – the first since in over 30 years – would provide almost \$9 million in additional funding the Maryland DNR specifically for enhancing the state’s natural resources and the opportunities to enjoy them. Additionally, removing barriers for entry, such as costs for non-resident college students, Sunday waterfowl prohibition, and physical barriers for those in suburban and exurban areas, will undoubtedly help to recruit and retain hunters in Maryland which in turn supports conservation and the economy.

Hunters have long paid the way for wildlife conservation, both for game and non-game, and these potential changes would only further enhance the American System of Conservation Funding’s impact on the state’s natural resources. Additionally, the latest numbers show that the state’s 93,000 hunters spend \$328 million on hunting related purchases, support over 4100 jobs, contribute \$301 million to the state’s GDP, and provide \$29 million in state and local taxes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 983 and for your consideration of this important conservation measure.

Sincerely,

Sven Lindquist
President - Safari Club International

Delta Waterfowl_Maryland HB983_Written Testimony_S

Uploaded by: Cyrus Baird

Position: FAV



March 3, 2023

Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 983 - *Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps*

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf Delta Waterfowl members both in Maryland and across the United States, I am writing to enthusiastically **SUPPORT House Bill 983**. This legislation, which represents the culmination of work among Maryland residents, hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, lawmakers and conservation minded individuals, will drastically increase hunting access and opportunity while boosting conservation funding for wildlife and their habitats for all to enjoy across Maryland.

As background, Delta Waterfowl is a leading conservation organization founded at the famed Delta Marsh in Manitoba, Canada, with its United States Headquarters in Bismarck, North Dakota. We have members and supporters all across North America, including thousands in Maryland, who represent waterfowl hunters in all arenas.

Delta Waterfowl works to produce ducks through intensive management programs and conservation of breeding duck habitat while also providing vital waterfowl research, and promoting and protecting the continuing tradition of waterfowl hunting in North America.

While this legislation is truly robust and will greatly impact all wildlife and sportsmen and women of Maryland, for the purposes of this testimony, we would like to highlight just a few of the provisions specifically and provide some additional background to underscore the potential impact.

Increased Conservation Funding

One of the main provisions of this legislation is its ability to drastically increase the overall funding for conservation through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). By slightly increasing the price of the suite of both resident and non-resident hunting licenses for the first time since 1989, the DNR is tapping into increased matching federal funds by 3 to 1 through the Pittman-Robertson Act. This “user-pay” system affectionally called the *American System of Conservation Funding* is the crown jewel model for conservation funding and has been in place for almost a century.

A modest, inflation adjusted price increase will allow the DNR to not only add roughly \$2 million in funding each year, but will allow them to tap into over \$6 million annually through federal matching funds. The



additional funding will go straight back into the core mission of the agency and allow them to better manage wildlife and their habitats while providing additional access and opportunities for the sportsmen and women of Maryland to hunt.

Additionally, increasing the price of the Maryland migratory game bird stamp will provide additional funding for critical waterfowl research and enhancement of waterfowl habitat on public lands in Maryland, as well the breeding grounds of the Prairie Pothole Region. Since 1974, stamp sales have provided more than \$7 million for migratory game projects. This price adjustment is consistent with neighboring states around Maryland including Virginia (\$10) and Delaware (\$15).

Access and Opportunity

This legislation will also repeal the antiquated prohibition on hunting migratory birds on Sundays during the established seasons. Sportsmen and women often cite "lack of time" as one of the number one reasons they stop hunting. Many hunters are prevented from introducing new or novice hunters to the great outdoors because they are competing against work, organized sports and other activities on Saturdays, which is currently their only opportunity to hunt outside of the typical work and school week. Allowing an extra day to access the outdoors will provide equity and also help recruit and retain a robust hunter population that is needed to provide critical funding for the overall conservation efforts in Maryland.

In recent years, several neighboring states (Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and more) have begun the process of repealing these prohibitions, and to date, there has been zero negative consequences on the resource or little to no user-conflict as a result. In Virginia, the Department of Wildlife Resources estimated that there was "no measurable impact" on waterfowl populations with the additional day of hunting – adding that "[duck] harvest on Sundays was comparable to duck harvest occurring on Mondays-Thursdays and about 1/3 that of Saturdays." More than 40 other states across the United States currently offer waterfowl hunting seven days a week during the season with no detrimental impact. Again, it's important to stress that there is zero data to support allowing Sunday hunting will negatively impact waterfowl populations or hunter satisfaction. More than 75% of waterfowl hunters surveyed in Maryland support the idea.

Another provision of this legislation also seeks to allow non-resident individuals enrolled at colleges and universities across Maryland to obtain a hunting license under the current resident rate. College-aged sportsmen and women are one of the fastest growing user groups within the hunting community, but often they are limited financially from purchasing licenses outside their home state. Currently, 29 states have implemented legislation allowing non-resident college students to purchase hunting and/or angling licenses at resident prices, with pending legislation in several legislatures across the country.

Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation

Lastly, this legislation will increase Maryland and the DNR's ability to provide robust hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) programs. By establishing the *Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program*, the DNR will be able to help educate and provide outreach to the public, particularly under-served communities, and foster an interest in outdoor recreation, stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation.



The R3 movement is one that is widely supported by all 50-state fish and wildlife agencies, and has had measurable impacts on the overall number of sportsmen and women as well as increasing societal awareness and support for activities like hunting and fishing.

In closing, House Bill 983 will provide Maryland with a once in a generation opportunity to drastically increase conservation funding for the DNR while providing Maryland residents with new and expanded hunting access and opportunity, outreach and education. We want to thank Senator Elfreth for her leadership on this legislation, as well as the co-sponsors. We look forward to working with this committee and the rest of the General Assembly as it works its way through the legislative process. We respectfully ask that you support the bill.

Respectfully,

Cyrus Hunter Baird

Cyrus Hunter Baird
Senior Director of Government Affairs
Delta Waterfowl Foundation

CC:

The Honorable Jack Bailey
The Honorable Dawn Gile
The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
The Honorable Mary-Dulany James
The Honorable Nancy J. King
The Honorable Mike McKay
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling
The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler
Paul Peditto, Director, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Ed Farley Testimony on HB 983.pdf

Uploaded by: Edward Farley

Position: FAV

Ed Farley Testimony on HB 983 (Maryland State Senate)
Environment and Transportation Committee
Friday, March 3rd, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB983 and to provide a scientific perspective on the impacts of the legislation. My name is Ed Farley, and I am the Regional Biologist for Ducks Unlimited in Maryland. We are the world leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation and, guided by science, we have conserved 15 million acres of habitat since 1937. I have been with DU for 7 years, but I've studied ducks my whole life.

As a waterfowl scientist, I am excited about this legislation, especially the opportunities to raise additional revenue for waterfowl conservation and the inclusion of Sunday hunting. The revenue from users, like hunters, is critical to sound science and Sunday hunting creates new opportunities for the users who generate that revenue. This is the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation that underpins our country's wildlife management. With access to Sundays, we can hopefully stem the declining numbers of hunters and ensure a steady stream of user fees for years to come. Without more paying users, we all will suffer from a lack of funding. Importantly, while this bill will increase hunter opportunity, it will not have an impact on waterfowl populations or behavior.

Waterfowl are among the most studied group of wildlife across the globe. All 50 states, Canadian provinces, and the US, Mexican and Canadian governments work together to study waterfowl populations and heavily regulate them. The USFWS manages waterfowl populations on a flyway scale, from where birds breed in Canada to their wintering areas further south. Maryland is one stop on that long journey. Part of this management system includes a hunting season framework that outlines the length and dates of waterfowl seasons within the flyway. MD hunting seasons follow the federal framework that all other states in the flyway must abide by, which ensures a sustainable harvest.

Next year, with or without Sunday hunting, the number of hunting days in the season will stay the same. And because season length is the primary driver of harvest, there should be no meaningful change in harvest numbers with the inclusion of Sundays. The only change would be a slightly reorganized calendar. I know of no scientific evidence that birds need a single day of rest or that Sunday hunting has a negative impact on bird populations.

Science is behind this legislation, so again I thank you Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify in support of this historic legislation, that will overturn a 300-year-old law, in favor of science. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

SportsmensCaucus_SB327HB983.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

Senate Chair
JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert & St. Mary's Counties

Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus
James Senate Office Building, Room 401
410-841-3673 or 301-858-3673
1-800-492-7122 Ext. 3673

Senate Co-Chair
KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9



House Chair
KEVIN HORNBERGER
Legislative District 35B
Cecil County

Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus
Lowe House Office Building, Room 325
410-841-3284 or 301-858-3284
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House Co-Chair
DANA JONES
Legislative District 30A

The Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus

The Sportsmen's Best Friend in Annapolis

March 1, 2023

Senate Bill 327/House Bill 983 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps – SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Feldman and Chairman Barve,

On behalf of the Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus, we are writing to express our support of Senate Bill 327 and House Bill 983.

This legislation would provide the State with substantially more funding than it has ever had for resource management in Maryland. As a result, this bill would provide more access and opportunities for sportsmen and sportswomen to engage in outdoor recreation.

Senate Bill 327 and House Bill 983 would provide more days for our State's youth and residents who work six days a week to be able to hunt. Based on a recent survey, 72% of hunters in Maryland want there to be more Sundays available for hunting in our State, and 69% of hunters say their hunting participation would increase if there were more Sunday hunting days. With this bill, Maryland would join the 44 other states that currently allow Sunday waterfowl hunting. The science is clear that permitting Sunday hunting of waterfowl will not negatively impact the resource.

Thank you for your consideration of our support for Senate Bill 327 and House Bill 983. Please contact us with any questions that you may have regarding our support for this legislation.

Sincerely,



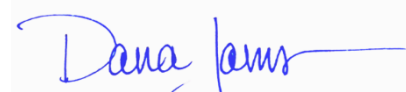
Senator Jack Bailey



Senator Katie Hester



Delegate Kevin Hornberger



Delegate Dana Jones

Testimony Favor HB-0983.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Winter

Position: FAV

WESTERN MARYLAND SPORTSMEN'S COALITION, INC.

Garrett Allegany Washington Frederick Carroll

February 28, 2023

Honorable Members of the Maryland House
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Md. 21401

**Subject: Testimony in Favor of HB-0983
Hunting, Wildlife Conservation and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion,
Management, Licenses, Permits and Stamps**

Dear Honorable Delegates:

My name is Ben Kelkye and I currently hold the office of President of the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc. (WMSC) The Coalition is an organization that consists of nearly twenty-six thousand individual members of many sportsmen's clubs of the five western Maryland counties of Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Carroll. We meet regularly with authorized representatives of our members' sporting clubs, their designated county representatives and members of other associations & organizations affiliated with our sport.

Briefly stated, our mission is to provide recognition and publicity for area sportsmen and conservation clubs engaged in wildlife management and/or the preservation of land, water, and open space resources and to provide a forum in which each member organization may present and discuss its local memberships' views on such issues. We strive to provide the sportsmen and conservationists of Western Maryland an opportunity to present a united and more effective voice in matters relating to the environment and fish and game management.

After considerable research and discussion, we request that you support and pass HB-0983 in your committee.

The sportsmen and women in the western counties of Maryland are fully aware that it has been over thirty years since the fees associated with hunting licenses and stamps have been raised. We know that these fees have a direct impact on the funding and good work of the Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage operation. It is our opinion that the proposed

increases in fees are modest and affordable. We also acknowledge that the associated Pittman-Robertson Federal funds will generate millions of additional dollars to help fund the overall wildlife conservation effort thru expanding hunting opportunities, increased land preservation and by funding the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach program.

We, as sportsmen, fully support the clarification of a private landowner's liability and access control issues provided in this bill. We also look forward to the potential hunting benefits that may be generated by the Department of Natural Resources and Maryland Department of Agriculture working together to explore rotational deer hunting opportunities on State lands, State parks and some private lands.

For these reasons the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 0983.

Sincerely,

Ben Kelkye

Ben Kelkye
President, Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc.
President, Frederick County Sportsmen's Council
ben@kelkye.com
301 401-6262

Signed: Joe Winter, President, Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Jerry Zembower, President, Allegany & Garrett County Sportsmen's Association
Matt Guilfoyle, President, Carroll County Sportsmen's Association

Julia Peebles Testimony on HB983_final.pdf

Uploaded by: Julia Peebles

Position: FAV

Julia Peebles Testimony on HB0983 (Maryland State House)
Environment and Transportation Committee
Friday, March 3rd, 2023

Thank you, Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB0983 in its entirety to advance conservation funding, enhance equitable access to outdoor recreation, provide Sunday waterfowl hunting, and to protect farmers and landowners from being liable for injuries to people or property on their land. I also want to note that this legislation was not created in a vacuum, but came together with broad support, multiple conversations, and negotiations. And because of this I want to thank Delegate Allen and all the sponsors for leading this effort.

My name is Julia Peebles, and I am the Manager of Agriculture and Sustainability Policy for Ducks Unlimited. I am also a lifelong hunter, a new mother of a 10-month-old daughter, and a resident of Prince George's County. This bill resonates on both a professional and personal level for me. In a professional sense, I have worked with agriculture communities across the country, and they have always supported expanding hunting opportunities for all. On a personal level, I want the ability to hunt with my daughter on Sundays since I work five days a week.

Being able to hunt waterfowl on Sundays and creating a program for the DNR to engage historically underserved communities, will ensure that future generations from all parts of Maryland will be able to enjoy what President Roosevelt aptly called our "rightful heritage," the great outdoors. There is no scientific data to suggest that expanding hunting access will impact waterfowl populations. In fact, Virginia, who legalized Sunday hunting for waterfowl a few years ago, and is part of the same flyway as Maryland, saw no appreciable difference in waterfowl harvests after implementing Sunday hunting.

These small changes, opening Sunday waterfowl hunting and creating a program for the DNR, will increase access and opportunity for youth, people of color and women, among others. It will be a watershed moment in the state's history and will cement the reputation of Maryland's tremendous natural resources being the most accessible in the country.

Right now, my daughter is too young to hunt, but I'm hoping to expose her to the outdoors soon and have her grow up with the same appreciation for nature, and a strong conservation ethic as I have. When my daughter is older, I want her to join me in the field. By supporting HB0983, you will enable working parents like me to use our time off on the weekends to hunt and ensure that our hunting heritage and love of nature persists through the generations. With your support and approval, our state will

be one step closer to ensuring that our woods and waters are not just the entitlement of the few, but the birthright of the many. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this legislation and thank you for your leadership on conservation issues in Maryland.

Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recrea

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 3, 2023

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps – HB 983 - Support

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair 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 vote favorably for Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps – HB 983.

This bill would alter the purpose of the Heritage Conservation Fund to include acquiring interests in land that can be used by the general public for hunting; establishing the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide to outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation; establishing a stamp for hunting sika deer; authorizing a nonresident attending a college or university in the State to purchase a resident hunting license; altering the fees charged for certain hunting and trapping licenses, permits, and stamps; codifying and altering the fees charged for a nonresident trapping license and a group furbearer permit; codifying the fee charged for an individual furbearer permit; authorizing a person to hunt migratory game birds on Sundays; altering the purposes for which the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund may be used; requiring the Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to develop a plan to address the overpopulation of deer in the State; requiring that a portion of an increase in certain funding be used for new Position Identification Numbers for the Department of Natural Resources relating to hunting, wildlife conservation, and outdoor recreation.

This bill covers a wide range of constituencies and programs to accomplish its goals. We support the programs and many facets of this bill that would improve the relationship between people and wildlife in our state. The funds raised by this legislation would be used for programs that address issues we hear about from Marylanders such as addressing the overpopulation of deer in Maryland. By establishing a comprehensive Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation, our state engages current stakeholders and ensures that the next generation of Marylanders is equipped with the information and resources to deal with issues facing Maryland and wildlife.

In closing, I would like to thank Delegate Allen for sponsoring HB 983 and ask the committee for a favorable report.

MBS support of HB 983.pdf

Uploaded by: Maribeth Kulynycz

Position: FAV



Maryland Bowhunters Society

P.O. Box 21
Willards, MD 21874

marylandbowhunterssociety.org

Good afternoon honorable chairman and ladies and gentlemen of the committee,

My name is Maribeth Kulynycz and I am here today on behalf of the Maryland Bowhunters Society in support of HB 983.

MBS has been advocating for hunters across Maryland since 1977. We pride ourselves on bringing a voice to the hunting community. Being from Somerset county myself and hunting Wicomico and Worcester counties as well, the overwhelming outcry from the average hunter is more Sunday hunting opportunities. As you've heard most people work and go to school Monday-Friday, allowing this extra day would be a huge benefit to the working class hunters and families across Maryland.

I am not only a hunter I am also an avid equestrian, as well as a CHA certified riding instructor who takes out trail rides several times a week on public land. During the hundreds of rides I've been a part of we have never once had a dangerous or unfriendly encounter with a hunter. Especially not a waterfowl hunter. Waterfowl hunters are usually hunting very early morning and typically focused more around water on blustery winter days. This allows us late mornings, mid day and early afternoons to take our rides out undisturbed. And when in doubt we wear fluorescent orange vests for an added measure of safety.

MBS also stands behind the increase in hunting license fees. For us on the shore we have seen a major influx in out of state hunters with sika deer being one of the biggest draws. The sika community is very vocal about wanting an increase, especially for out of state licenses. Considering it's been decades since an increase in license fees we feel it is time for this to happen. And in the long run it will be a benefit to all outdoorsmen and women.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

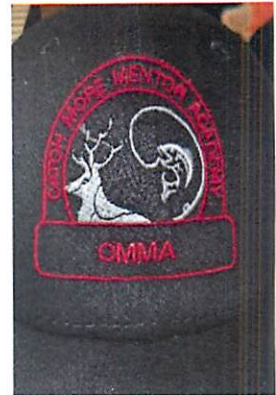
Maribeth Kulynycz
MBS executive secretary

Master Signed Mike Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Smith

Position: FAV

Catch More Mentor Academy
11917 Femshire Road
Gaithersburg Maryland 20878
240-620-7503



Michael Smith Testimony for House Bill 983

My name is Michael Smith and I have been part of the Wildlife Programs for over fifty years. I have perfected my skills in both small and big game hunting along with fishing and other wildlife. In the African American community, most of the farmland is gone and the opportunity to gain access to other hunting grounds is nearly impossible. If something isn't done within the next few years, I believe the African American hunters will become extinct.

It's a foregone conclusion that I found that minorities (especially African Americans) don't have access or knowledge of the many services that are available in wildlife sports. However, I must admit that due to my association with other hunting groups, I have had the opportunity to witness what is actually available to all hunters.

In 2021 I contacted one of Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commissioners (Warren Fleming who is with me today) to see how this oversight could be improved. I introduced a concept to Mr. Fleming that there should be a mentorship program in Montgomery County that will provide training in small game hunting, gun safety, target shooting, first time hunters, classroom training and field training to minorities and other hunting groups. This program will also include the art fishing techniques. This program has been approved with the help of Mr. Fleming and a pilot program is scheduled to start in April of this year. We have built a bridge that could be used to connect the youth to the techniques of hunting by providing a platform that will connect to the community.

During my years of hunting, I have mentored many youths and first-time hunters, and when I attended the R3 Program this year, I was so impressed to see and hear that the Department of Natural Resources recognized the disparities found in the minority community related to wildlife participation.

It is imperative that Bill 0983 be passed so that the sport of hunting can continue and the many citizens who love this sport get a fair share of the services that are available.

MICHAEL SMITH
Michael Smith
PRESIDENT C.M.M.A.

HB 983 Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor

Uploaded by: Michelle Dietz

Position: FAV

Friday March 3, 15, 2023

TO: Kumar Barve, Chair of House Environment and Transportation Committee; and Committee Members
FROM: Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; and Caitlin Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation & Climate Policy Analyst
POSITION: Support HB 983 Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 983 offered by Delegate Allen. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

HB 983 would allow the Heritage Conservation Fund to be used for land acquisition for hunting and establishes a Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program within the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Investments like these will continue to foster an interest in outdoor recreation in Maryland as well as build stewardship and wildlife conservation interest and access in communities across our state. DNR currently uses several factors to determine what lands qualify for acquisition through the Heritage Conservation Fund. These lands are important natural areas that have ecological and conservation value, providing habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species or unique natural communities. HB 983 would enable the fund to acquire lands that the general public can use for hunting. Conservation organizations like TNC use the Heritage Conservation Fund land acquisition recommendations, which can expand access to hunting on public and private lands across the state.

Maryland's outdoor recreation economy generates 109,000 direct jobs, \$14 billion in consumer spending, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and \$951 million in state and local tax revenue. State hunting and fishing licenses and permits as well as federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing gear are the backbone for funding state wildlife agencies. Accessing this funding is key in wildlife management and curbing biodiversity loss. Outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting are important access points to nature for many residents, in addition to providing substantial economic benefits.

HB 983 would also establish the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program within DNR. Environmental education helps to foster a deeper understanding of the critical role that nature plays in our everyday lives and can create future natural resource conservation advocates. This program would play a key role in building interest in outdoor recreation, wildlife conservation, and environmental stewardship by expanding outreach to communities across Maryland. The program would engage with elementary and middle school students, community leaders, organizations and universities across the state, as well as with groups who have historically been denied access to outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship opportunities. By expanding access to natural places for recreation and conservation, and by investing in educational programs, we can expand Marylander's awareness and appreciation of nature and continue to protect these important places.

The Nature Conservancy commends Delegate Allen for introducing this legislation to invest in outdoor recreation, wildlife conservation, and environmental stewardship across the state for current and future generations.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 983.

Del Allen Hunting Bill Letterhead.pdf

Uploaded by: Nick Allen

Position: FAV

NICK ALLEN
Legislative District 8
Baltimore County

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Housing and Real Property

Local Government and
Bi-County Agencies

Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Open Space



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3rd, 2023

Testimony in Favor of HB0983

Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and members of the finest committee in the General Assembly, thank you for having me.

For the record, my name is Delegate Nick Allen, and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 983, which updates our hunting and wildlife conservation laws with the intended goal of expanding hunting and conservation opportunities, controlling deer populations, and preserving land.

I'm proud to sponsor this bill for a number of reasons, but partially because I am a hunter. Really, I am what is called a "late onset hunter". I discovered the joy of hunting only recently, in my late 20s, but I wish I had the opportunity to learn about and enjoy the sport earlier in my life. I also consider myself a nature lover and an animal lover. And, again, I wish I hadn't waited until I was almost 30 to learn that those things are NOT contradictory, and that hunters are typically the largest financial contributors to habitat conservation in the United States.

House Bill 983 does a lot of different things, and a lot of great things for wildlife and conservation in Maryland. It is 12 pages long, and is, by far, the longest bill for which I am the primary sponsor this session.

This bill will provide outreach and education to communities that have historically lacked access to hunting and conservation programs. It will codify a first-ever program to reach underserved communities to engage them in wildlife conservation, stewardship, and safe and ethical hunting education. This program is historic, possibly the first in the country that is focused on these communities and helping them to get involved in conservation and nature.

The bill will also, at the request of the hunting community, take a measured approach to increasing the licensing and stamp fees in Maryland, which will bring us closer in line with the other states in the area, while still keeping us competitive and still cheaper, on average, than Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia. Doing this will also allow Maryland to take advantage of increased federal funding through the Pittman-Robertson Act, generating an additional 6.8 million dollars that will go towards conservation and these other programs.

I also want to note that these fees have not been increased in Maryland since 1989—which, for the record, is the year before I was born.

This bill also establishes a new stamp to hunt the Sika deer, a species unique to Maryland within the United States and a major attraction for many to visit our state.

Despite all this, I know that most of the discussion we will have about this 12-page bill will probably center on a single line within it. I think we all already know what I'm talking about: Sunday hunting.

As a result, I am prepared to address these concerns head-on and let my friends on this incredibly diverse panel elaborate further on the other remarkable things this bill will do and the many people and communities that will benefit from it.

If you think 1989 was a long time ago, let me point out that the prohibition on Sunday hunting in Maryland dates back to 1723, not during the reign of King Charles I, Delegate Holmes, but close—during the reign of King George I.

It is important to note that the Sunday hunting provision of this bill is narrow: it applies ONLY to migratory game birds— primarily geese and ducks—and allows for each county to opt in or out of this provision, or, if they choose, allow hunting before noon on Sundays. We included this portion because we acknowledge that not all of Maryland's counties are the same.

The fact that this bill applies only to migratory game birds means several things:

First, it only applies to a short season. In this case, we are talking about hunting on a grand total of 8-10 Sundays per year, out of 52 weeks. Additionally, the team at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is one of the best in the world, and they are confident that this change will not negatively affect the populations of these species.

Second, it will help avoid conflict between hunters and equestrians. Most hunters hunt migratory game birds near water, or on the water, and in other areas where horse trails typically do not run. Additionally,

an ideal day for a duck or goose hunter is the opposite of an ideal day for an equestrian—ducks and geese prefer cooler, cloudy, rainy days.

Finally, there is a level of safety inherent in restricting this to bird hunting. Rather than using rifles and bullets that can travel long distances, bird hunters hunt exclusively with bird shot, which is small in size, dissipates rapidly after a short distance and, even if it manages to travel a couple hundred feet, is not typically dangerous outside of that effective range of 150 feet.

Ultimately, here is what I believe to be the real benefit of this provision of the bill (which is, I will remind you, a single line out of 12 pages).

Expanding migratory bird hunting to Sundays essentially doubles the number of opportunities for students and working people to hunt migratory birds. Currently, unless someone misses a day of work, or a student misses a day of school, they can only hunt geese and ducks eight days out of the year. That is it. What we are proposing is increasing that number from eight to 16.

The proponents of this bill are average, working Marylanders who are busy people, but they have taken the time to line up in support of this bill despite the increase in fees to participate. They are doing so in part because they believe they're getting more in return—including more weekends to enjoy the outdoors.

Thank you, all, for your time. I respectfully request a favorable report and I look forward to answering all of your questions about House Bill 983.

Sincerely,
Delegate Nick Allen
District 8

HB0983_DNR_SUP_E&T_3-3-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Peditto

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

March 3, 2023

Bill Number: House Bill 983 – First Reader

Short Title: Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Department's Position: SUPPORT

Explanation of Department's Position

The Department supports HB 983 because it offers a multi-faceted approach that will enable the Wildlife & Heritage Service (WHS) to allocate more resources to the conservation and management of Maryland's wildlife. The legislation will enable WHS to better reach urban and suburban communities to educate them about the value of the state's natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities, it will create additional hunting opportunities that will help with recruitment and retention of the hunters who fund the majority of wildlife management, and it will provide for a long-needed adjustment to hunting license and stamp fees that have not changed for 30 or more years.

Background Information

Environmental awareness, including the need to conserve our wildlife resources, is at an all-time high and WHS is a leader in promoting this message. The unit currently employs several staff whose primary responsibilities include outreach and education. However, as the state's human population steadily increases, threats to wildlife and other natural resources also increase, causing the need for additional public education. At the same time, there is great value to public health by offering outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting. Creating a specialized outreach and recreation program with dedicated staff will assist WHS in addressing both of these subjects.

Revenue is required to offer outreach programs like ones mentioned above and to manage Maryland's vast wildlife resources. The funds for these activities primarily come from hunting license sales and matching federal grant monies. Thus, recruiting and maintaining hunters is essential to maintaining these funds and for WHS to fulfill its mission. Offering additional hunting opportunities through more lands to hunt, more license options, and more days to hunt (especially weekends) aids significantly with recruiting and retaining hunters. With a resident license available to college students, many of these students will return to Maryland and hunt after graduating. Sunday hunting affords many hunters who work and cannot hunt through the week twice as much time to be in the field, increasing the likelihood that they will remain hunters.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)
emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8426 (office) ♦ 443-223-1176 (cell)

Maryland hunting license and stamp fees have not been significantly adjusted for over 30 years. Adjusting these fees will enable WHS to improve essential services to the public and better fulfill its mission to promote and conserve the state's vast ecological resources. Along with the fee adjustment revenue itself, WHS is eligible to receive federal grant monies awarded at a 1:3 ratio through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. This means for every \$1 WHS receives directly in fee adjustments, \$3 in federal grant money is available for conservation-related work. By adjusting hunting license and stamp fees, WHS can receive more federal grant money to further the conservation and outdoor recreation mission. Unfortunately, as it stands now, federal grant money opportunities continue to increase while WHS matching special funds remain stagnant.

It is important to note that hunting license and stamp revenues are not used just for hunting-related activities. WHS is responsible for the management and conservation of all of the State's wildlife resources. Along with approximately one dozen primary game species, WHS manages hundreds of rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals. Hunting license and stamp fees are the primary source of State funding for ensuring the long-term conservation of these species and the native ecosystems and natural communities that are critical to their survival. Adequate funding is needed for WHS to manage and protect these resources in the face of a rapidly growing human population and a changing climate.

WHS also manages 64 public Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) totaling over 125,000 acres throughout the State. These areas are open to the public, free of charge, for wildlife recreation opportunities including hunting, hiking, and wildlife watching. Rapidly increasing operational costs have made it challenging to conduct essential maintenance and habitat management on these WHS lands, which can affect the safety and enjoyment that WMA visitors expect. Additional funding is needed to improve these lands and offer quality experiences for their users.

Bill Explanation

HB 983 creates a conservation education and outdoor recreation program with dedicated staff focused on communities who normally have not accessed such activities. The legislation addresses WHS funding issues by adjusting hunting license and stamp fees, and by improving hunter recruitment and retention programs. HB 983 assists with hunter recruitment efforts in multiple ways, including by offering a resident-priced license to non-resident college students so that they can more easily enjoy Maryland's vast hunting opportunities. HB 983 also assists with hunter recruitment and retention by enabling additional Sunday hunting opportunities for migratory birds. Lastly, recruitment and retention is enhanced by the creation of additional public hunting lands through the use of expanded funding opportunities. HB 983 also creates an avenue for WHS to work cooperatively with the Department of Agriculture to address deer population concerns as they relate to agricultural crop damage.

Rachel Dawson Favorable Testimony HB983.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Dawson

Position: FAV

Rachel Dawson Favorable Testimony - HB0983

Maryland State House Environment and Transportation Committee

Friday, March 3rd, 2023

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rachel Dawson and I'm currently a resident of southern Anne Arundel County, but I was born on Deal Island in Somerset County and raised all over the Delmarva Peninsula. For more than three decades, I've been an avid hunter, angler, and general outdoors enthusiast. I'm also a career conservation professional, member of a variety of conservation organizations, and volunteer as a hunter safety instructor – but I'm writing today in support of HB983 as a private citizen.

For the last five years, I've been a volunteer mentor for the First Shot program here in Maryland, which is a partnership between DNR, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wild Turkey Federation. Of all my outdoor pursuits, this is by far the most meaningful. I've been honored to help connect more than a dozen people from a wide variety of backgrounds and all corners of the state with nature in a totally new way for them. I've gotten to see firsthand the look of awe in their eyes the first time they hear a turkey gobble or the way they freeze when a deer steps out in front of them. I've helped them through the planning, the hunt, and everything that comes after. I've celebrated their successes and helped them learn from the inevitable mistakes. I've watched them gain immeasurable confidence. I'm lucky to be a part of it and it has made me a better outdoorsperson.

People come to hunting for all sorts of reasons. Some want to spend more time outside. Others want to feed their families or know more about where their food comes from. Many want to challenge themselves in new ways. And there's no shortage of interest in hunting; during the pandemic, the demand for hunter safety classes was through the roof. **Unfortunately, many new hunters immediately encounter an opportunity barrier and I've seen how hard it can be for them to stick with it -- whether it's places to go, resources for learning and improving, or just time to go afield. HB983 will help with all that.** More resources for hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) mean we can support Marylanders throughout their hunting journeys, especially those in underserved communities. And more Sunday hunting opportunities are a matter of equity for folks who only have the weekends. And if we can bring and keep hunters afield, it's an economic benefit to Maryland's rural communities and a funding win for conservation.

As a lifelong hunter, it is easy for me to say how important these investments are, so it may be more compelling to read the experiences of two new hunters who have been through the mentored hunt program:

"The First Shot Mentored deer hunt not only helped me learn to hunt, it introduced me to a wonderful mentor who I consider to be a friend for life. As a recently divorced woman, I wanted to learn to how to hunt so I could provide food for myself and my daughter but I didn't know where to start. This program provided everything I needed for a successful hunt with my mentor. If this program did not exist, I would have never learned to hunt because I didn't have the confidence and I would not have had the opportunity to meet a wonderful group of supportive people. The program is more than learning to hunt,

it is about learning about Maryland's great outdoors and building relationships with people you probably wouldn't meet in your regular day-to-day life. It's a wonderful program and I hope it continues to exist in the future.” – Tasha, Dorchester County

“Having not grown up in a hunting family I had to get creative with finding ways to learn the skillset beyond just taking Hunter Safety. Lucky for me I live in Maryland where the DNR takes educating newcomers several steps beyond the basics. In 2019 I stumbled upon some information online that ultimately led me to an invaluable mentorship connection in 2021, without which I would never have had the confidence to head afield on my own as I have been frequently doing since. It’s very hard to concisely explain just how much learning from my mentor and her peers has done for me, but it has been nothing short of life-changing. My perception and priorities in the outdoors are completely changed. Every experience gives me something to go home and think about and reframes my approach to conservation and the evolving ways we need to respect our environment and the species we’re so lucky to pursue out there. I cannot imagine where I’d be without this aspect of my life, which my mentorship fostered and nurtured to where it is today- grateful isn’t a big enough word!” – Ashley, Prince George’s County

With numbers of hunters declining and people becoming increasingly disconnected from the outdoors, now is the time to commit to meaningful steps toward outdoor equity and opportunity for folks like Ashley and Tasha and all Marylanders. Thank you for considering HB983 as a means to do just that.

Chesapeake Conservancy HB 983 favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Reed Perry

Position: FAV

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Saving the Chesapeake's Great Rivers and Special Places

716 Giddings Avenue, Suite 42 | Annapolis, MD 21401
www.chesapeakeconservancy.org | 443.321.3610

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation
Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation
Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 983 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation -
Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps -
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Environment and
Transportation Committee,

On behalf of Chesapeake Conservancy, I would like offer our support for HB 983
concerning Hunting, Wildlife Conservation and Outdoor Recreation – Funding,
Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

As an organization working to conserve lands throughout Maryland and the
Chesapeake Bay watershed and expand public access to outdoor spaces and
experiences, we believe that hunting and outdoor recreation are an important
component of Maryland's overall conservation efforts. HB 983 would support
conservation, outdoor recreation and conservation stewardship in a number of ways.

Importantly, this legislation would increase hunting license fees for the first time in
more than 40 years, which will provide a significant funding increase for the
Department of Natural Resources to manage wildlife conservation efforts.

Secondly, the legislation would a new Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach
program that will specifically support education and conservation opportunities for
young people and others who have been historically excluded from hunting and
outdoor recreation. Funding for this new program would be sourced by the increased
hunting license fee.

Thank you for considering our letter of support, and I urge a favorable report of HB
983

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joel Dunn".

Joel Dunn
President and CEO
Chesapeake Conservancy

Samantha Pedder testimony on HB 983.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Pedder

Position: FAV

Samantha Pedder testimony on HB 983 (Maryland House of Representatives)
Environment and Transportation Committee
Friday, March 3rd, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Barve, for the chance to submit both oral and written testimony in support of HB 983 to advance conservation funding and support increased access to hunting and outdoor recreation for *all* people in Maryland.

My name is Samantha Pedder, and I am testifying on behalf of this bill for many personal and professional reasons. First, I am a landowner in Worcester county, Maryland, and have been since 2018. I've held a hunting or fishing license in this state as a non-resident almost every year for more than a decade. My family and I have treasured our time hunting and fishing in this state and have spent countless hours pursuing Maryland's natural resources – from the eastern shore to the forests of western Maryland. I also have mentored numerous new hunters in this state, teaching them to shoot firearms and taking them on their first hunts or fishing trips. As you can imagine, this state and its natural resources have significant meaning to me as a sportswoman. It is an honor to contribute to this conversation and support the continued successful management of these resources by the MD Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR).

Beyond my personal interests, I hold two degrees in wildlife and natural resource management and a master's in business administration. My career has been dedicated to assisting conservation organizations in "R3," or recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and other outdoors people. I've worked on R3 efforts since 2011, when your northern neighbors, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, first employed me. I've traveled the country for my former employers, visiting state fish and wildlife agencies in their home offices and working with them to develop their R3 strategies. Just as MD DNR has recently done, I've helped agencies to host summits to engage user groups in their R3 strategy, and I've also reviewed and/or written R3 plans for the agencies. MD DNR also very recently had their statewide R3 plan endorsed – another milestone accomplishment for this agency investing in R3.

Some may know that this bill has been referred to as the "R3" bill in your state, and I can understand why. The term, R3, has become synonymous with modernizing agencies' and other organization's efforts to engage people of *all backgrounds* in outdoor recreation. For an agency, R3 might mean investing in new programs targeting adult hunters rather than just youth. They might go about this by adjusting fees for college students to pay in-state rather than non-resident prices. An investment in R3 might also be conducted by connecting urban and exurban audiences, people historically who may have yet to have had access to hunting and other outdoor recreation or outdoor education, with information and opportunities to become participants and stewards of Maryland's natural resources themselves

You see, the language in this bill could be considered a page from an R3 plan. This is the ideal situation for a state fish and wildlife agency to be in – one in which the mandates of this bill align with their current priorities AND provide extended funding to activate this plan. Capacity is often another constraint, and yet this bill again allocates eight new positions to the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program – these will be employees implementing the newly endorsed R3 plan in your state. The timing of this bill is very significant for your agency's success in implementing its R3 efforts, and I could personally not be more excited to see what your agency will do – if this bill is passed.

Overall, the conservation community is at an inflection point – the list of "needs" for conservation and wildlife management continues to increase while the agencies' budgets to do that management have not. I've worked with your agency's employees for several years now, and I can attest that they have the ability AND the motivation to implement these plans and ensure that the increased funding allocated to their agency is truly an investment, with the dividends yielding long-term support and participation inclusive of *all Marylanders* in hunting and other outdoor recreation. You can set your agency on the path to success with the passage of this bill.

As a non-resident license buyer, I am more than willing to pay an increased fee because, in my experience, this agency will ensure that those dollars are dedicated to conserving the resources I cherish, and more importantly provide increased opportunities for equitable access to these resources by people of all backgrounds. After today, with your approval, your state will be one-step closer to continuing to provide a positive future for wildlife management and outdoor recreation in Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this legislation. It is my honor to provide my thoughts and opinions, and I thank you for your time.

HB983_FAV_HSUS.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Boyles Griffin

Position: FAV



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Bill: HB 983
Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee
Position: FAVORABLE
Date: March 3, 2023

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our Maryland members and supporters, supports House Bill 983. While the bill has multiple components, the most critical part of the legislation is that, by raising hunting license fees a modest amount, the bill would significantly increase funding for Maryland's Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife and Heritage Service, ensuring more resources for wildlife management and conservation funding across the state.

Every dollar the State raises in hunting and trapping license fees is matched by federal funding. Those funds are the primary source of revenue for the State's efforts to restore habitat, conduct scientific research and education, and manage Maryland's wildlife for future generations. However, over the years the number of licenses sold has steadily decreased while license fees have remained the stagnant, and as a result, every year, the State leaves more and more federal matching dollars on the table. Therefore, increasing license fees alone would significantly increase the amount of revenue that the State receives in federal funding to support the work of State's Wildlife and Heritage Service.

The work of the Wildlife and Heritage Service is critical to protect and preserve Maryland's native species and the habitat in which they reside. This bill is not only supported by the Humane Society of the United States but also by a broad coalition of groups, strong evidence of its merit. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 983.

Thom Slavin Support for HB 983.pdf

Uploaded by: Thom Slavin

Position: FAV

Upper Bay Gun Club 951 Pond Neck Road
Earleville, MD 21919

March 3, 2023

**HONORABLE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE –**

Support House Bill 983

As a waterfowl hunter of over 40 years and a commercial guide I feel that this bill will enhance waterfowl hunting in the State.

Please accept this letter into your testimony for support of this bill as it is written.

Thank you Thom Slavin: 443-309-3788

HOM Testimony on House Bill 983 (Omnibus Hunting B

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

March 3, 2023

SUPPORT

House Bill 983 (Hunting, Wildlife Conservation and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps)

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: (1) 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 (link below); and (2) hunting in Maryland is a powerful economic engine as reported by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (link below).

https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/introduction_to_american_conservation_funding_.pdf
<https://congressionalsportsmen.org/uploads/page/Maryland-Factsheet.pdf>

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

HONORABLE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND support House Bill 983 as expressed herein. We have developed this written testimony with an eye towards questions likely to be asked with attendant responses...*responses provided by Maryland's Department of Natural Resources for each question asked.*

QUESTION 1: What is the nexus between federal Pittman/Robertson ("PR") matching dollars and State hunting license fee revenues, aka ratio of \$3 to \$1?

Every license sold with a minimum of \$5 in revenue is equal to \$15 in reimbursable funds from the feds via PR.

QUESTION 2: Quantify the impact on wildlife management, research, and habitat improvement from not having an influx of new State and federal dollars since the last hunting license fee increase in 1989?

The value of a dollar from 1989 to 2013 has risen to \$2.40. So a \$24.50 resident license in 1989 should be approximately \$60 today if the license fee tracked with inflation over time. If the license fee had been increased ten years ago to even a modest \$35, then we would have generated an additional \$38M in additional State revenues AND over \$115M in additional PR funds. In other words, we've left over \$115M in potential free federal dollars on the table in just the last decade. By State and federal 'rule' all of those funds must be used to improve

wildlife habitat and support wildlife-dependent recreation in Maryland. We've lost more than \$100M in opportunity to do so – just in the last ten years.

QUESTION 3: Projected State special fund revenue attainment from increasing hunting license fees under the bill coupled with a projected attainment of federal PR matching dollars by doing so?

\$2.2M in State special funds. \$6.6M in federal funds. Just shy of \$9M total.

QUESTION 4: With additional federal and State dollars in hand, how does WHS (DNR's Wildlife & Heritage Service) envision spending those dollars – both short term and long term – to mitigate the detrimental impact on wildlife management/research/habitat improvement?

USFWS (United States Fish & Wildlife Service) just projected another record bump to the PR funding opportunities available to the states. Every year, for the past five or so, has recorded the highest potential revenues into the PR funding pool – every year that we do not have the stateside dollars risks leaving federal funds on the table...where other states may take advantage of what would have been ours.

The new dollars would be used to help us manage the expanded portfolio of land we manage – up from 40K acres in 2000 to nearly 130K acres today – making WHS one of the largest land managers in Maryland. We would improve boundary marking, parking facilities and other infrastructure to ensure our wildlife enthusiast visitors, hunters, and others, have a wonderful experience at our wildlife management areas. We will continue to pursue a first-ever study on sika deer populations, wild turkey populations and renew our scientific analysis of our black bear population, including the suspected growth of the population into more suburban counties east of Frederick. Expansion of our efforts to mitigate overabundant deer populations would also be possible as we have no other source of funding to assist farmers and other landowners and their conflicts with deer.

QUESTION 5: What has been Virginia's experience with Sunday waterfowl hunting in the broadest of terms?

There was no measurable impact on waterfowl harvest with the addition of Sundays and no negative impact to the overall waterfowl or other user experience since most waterfowl hunting occurs on private land early in the morning and often over water in the winter – a place and time when few others are out and about in this region.

Below is a relevant quote from Virginia wildlife officials:

“The addition of Sundays for migratory bird hunting did not change the overall duck and goose harvest appreciably. Duck harvest on Sundays was comparable to duck harvest occurring on Mondays-Thursdays and about 1/3 that of Saturdays.”

QUESTION 6: When was the last survey undertaken – assuming Virginia-based Responsive Management (“RM”) – that quantified Maryland hunters' responses in favor of Sunday waterfowl hunting?

2020 study by RM – key takeaways for purposes here: The large majority of hunters want more days of Sunday hunting (72% want more), far exceeding either those who want the same level of Sunday hunting (18%). Additionally, the large majority say that their hunting participation in Maryland would increase (69%) if there were more Sunday hunting days. (THIS LAST POINT IS CRITICAL TO R3 [“Recruitment, Retention & Reactivation] – especially retention of existing hunters).

Economics of Hunting in Maryland

Spending per day: \$2.2 million

Salaries and Wages: \$387 million

Federal Taxes: \$96 million

State & Local Taxes: \$84 million

Ripple Effect: \$1.25 billion

Source: USFWS

QUESTION 7: What is the most recent hunting-related data available that speaks to the economics of hunting in Maryland?

According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Maryland Sportsmen & Women support: (1) spending per day @ \$2.2 million; (2) salaries and wages @ \$387 million; (3) federal taxes @ \$96 million; (4) State and local taxes @ \$84 million; and (5) ripple effect @ \$1.25 billion.

QUESTION 8: Does WHS currently administer a Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program or some facsimile?

Sort of – we have staff in our Game Program (under Associate Director Karina Stonesifer) who also does education and outreach – including Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program (BOW), National Archery in Schools Program (NASP) and Hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3).

QUESTION 9: Identify – if possible – envisioned benefits of creating/funding a Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program within DNR?

We would startup a first-ever effort to truly advance our work on BOW, R3 and NASP, including a focus in counties and towns where we've traditionally lacked the staffing (and therefore time) to put our team onsite to reach out, teach and stay connected. We also have a vision to connect with the universities and colleges in Maryland, again with a focus on urban and suburban, to build interest in the programs above in those communities. We have very good data suggesting that students in these settings are interested in learning more about wildlife and outdoor recreation but do not have ready-access to teachers or mentors. We intend to build that bridge with this new program.

QUESTION 10: Are there any other states with something comparable to Maryland's envisioned Wildlife Conservation, Education and Outreach Program? If so, what have been the reportable outcomes?

In a June 22 study of R3 efficacy, eight states showed measurable "lift" (meaning hunters retained or recruited after being introduced to the state's R3 programming). Of those eight, two have similar demographics to Maryland (Massachusetts and Connecticut) – they experienced approximately 25% lift rates for their hunter R3 efforts.

QUESTION 11: How much existing State-owned land is currently available for public hunting, aka 50% of the Chesapeake Forest Lands?

But for some highly-developed or ordinance restricted insular locations, nearly all the DNR-managed land is open to some form of hunting – there are very few examples of un-hunted properties across the State.

QUESTION 12: Does DNR/WHS have a targeted acreage/geographical goal with increased dollars for the State purchase of additional lands of public hunting?

The goal is to spend down the available POS (Program Open Space) coffers on valuable ecological and recreational lands. WHS has been a primary participant in that effort and has seen land portfolio growth more than most other units of government over the past two decades. We will continue to push for those opportunities to the extent we have new funding to support responsible management of those lands.

QUESTION 13: Has Responsive Management – and/or any other public or private surveying entity – reported on the interest of Maryland hunters for additional public lands for increased hunting opportunities?

Several inquiries have shown that hunters would welcome more hunting land, particularly as interest in non-resident hunters has grown (70% of non-resident hunters indicated a very good experience with hunting in Maryland...2008 finding by Responsive Management).

QUESTION 14: Will FWS approve of federal PR dollars for (1) WHS hiring 8 new employees; and (2) purchasing privately-owned land for public hunting usage?

Yes – USFWS’ sideboards require that we use their funds (or our stateside license and stamp revenues) for wildlife habitat/management for birds and mammals only (no insects or herps) and wildlife-dependent recreation (hunting). So to the extent that those staff and funds are ONLY used for wildlife habitat, management and hunting-related activities, then we will be reimbursed for those expenditures at a rate of \$3 to \$1.

Respectfully submitted,

William R. Miles, Advocate



**MARYLAND HAS LOST AN ESTIMATED \$100 MILLION
IN MATCHING FEDERAL DOLLARS OVER THE LAST 10
YEARS**

**SURVEYS INDICATE MARYLAND HUNTERS FAVOR
SUNDAY WATERFOWL HUNTING**

**REPORTS PROVE THAT MORE HUNTERS DESIRE
ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HUNTING LANDS**

**FEDERAL USE OF MATCHING DOLLARS FOR NEW
WHS POSITIONS AND PURCHASE OF NEW LANDS
FOR PUBLIC HUNTING PURPOSES IS PERMITTED**

**EXPERIENCE IN VIRGINIA WITH SUNDAY
WATERFOWL HUNTING INDICATES NO DETRIMENTAL
IMPACT ON THE RESOURCE**

Give the Birds A Day.pdf

Uploaded by: Adam Hock

Position: FWA

Adam S. Hock
100 North Cross Street
Chestertown, MD 21620
happygrasslawn@yahoo.com

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** House Bill 0983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

I support House Bill 0983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps **except the provision to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting.**

I fully support the majority of the bill and agree that most clauses are in alignment with conservation hunting. However, the provision that would allow Sunday waterfowl hunting would be detrimental to the waterfowl populations and would adversely affect quality of life of landowners and visitors alike on Sundays during waterfowl season.

The Atlantic flyway and its waterfowl are an important resource for our wellbeing and livelihood on the eastern shore of Maryland as well as many along the east coast, We are not alone in the effort to protect and conserve this amazing resource. From Maine to Georgia, we must work together to ensure the protection of wildlands and the species that depend on them to survive and thrive. As my 3 year old son becomes older I hope to pass along the traditions and knowledge I have been blessed with by having the opportunity to hunt with my father. I truly believe that allowing Sunday hunting would be a move in the wrong direction and put migratory waterfowl at greater risk of over harvesting and the possibility of never recovering.

Therefore, I urge you to amend HB0983 to remove the allowance for Sunday waterfowl hunting.

Sincerely,

Adam S. Hock

cc: The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.

The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

HB983 Support With Amendment - Boaters.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Aus

Position: FWA

Maryland Charterboat Association
Executive Vice President Andrew Aus
maverickchartersllc@gmail.com

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT House Bill 983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation
– Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

This letter serves as a Support with Amendment for House Bill 983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.

I take no exception to the bill as drafted except for the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting would adversely affect the AP population of waterfowl in the state. I represent over 140 small businesses in the state, that all provide tens of thousands of recreational anglers and hunters the ability to enjoy the great outdoors. Allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting will more than double the harvest of a population that we have worked so hard to rebuild. Furthermore, the Sunday hunting day will no longer give the waterfowl a day to rest. This bill will not help rebuild the population for future generations, as conservationists of the state's natural resources we oppose all Sunday waterfowl hunting.

Therefore, I submit my Support with Amendment to HB983, and ask that you consider not allowing Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Andrew Aus

Ben House Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Ben Herr

Position: FWA

Ben Herr
200 Greenhouse Lane
Chestertown Md 21620
brherr30@gmail.com

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** House Bill 0983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

I support House Bill 0983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps **except the provision to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting.**

I fully support the majority of the bill, and agree that most clauses are in alignment with conservation hunting. However, the provision that would allow Sunday waterfowl hunting would be detrimental to the waterfowl populations and would adversely affect the quality of life of land owners and visitors alike on Sundays during waterfowl season.

Therefore, I urge you to amend HB0983 to remove the allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting

Sincerely,

Ben Herr

The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

Support with amendment of HB 983 - Hunting, Wildli

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FWA



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 3, 2023

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support with Amendment of HB 983 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in support with amendment of HB 983. This comprehensive wildlife management and hunting bill does many things. First, it cleans up the landowner liability language to ensure a landowner has proper liability coverage if they allow hunters to hunt on their land. Secondly, it establishes the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation. Next, it establishes a stamp for hunting sika deer and allows statewide Sunday hunting for waterfowl.

One of the biggest parts of the bill is it increased the fees for many of the hunting licenses and stamps. These fees haven't been increased in 36 years. The increased fees are to generate the needed funding for DNR to qualify for the available USDA matching funds that the department is currently receiving. These additional funding will allow DNR's Wildlife services division to provide the needed food habitats. MDFB has been asking for several years now to start and fund a farmer cost-share program to plant private land forage crops (AKA sacrificial crops) to help curb the crop loss on farms due to wildlife damage while also helping with the much-needed forage habitat.

MDFB Policy: We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state.

We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop damage.

MDFB requests the following amendment:

Amendment #1: On page 12, Line 25, ADD a new **(3) A PORTION OF THE INCREASE SHALL BE USED FOR THE CREATION AND FUNDING OF A FARMER COST-SHARE PROGRAM TO PLANT PRIVATE LAND FORAGE CROPS (AKA SACRIFICIAL CROPS) TO HELP CURB THE CROP LOSS ON FARMS DUE TO WILDLIFE DAMAGE WHILE INCREASING FORAGE HABITAT.**

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 983 WITH 1 AMENDMENT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson".

Colby Ferguson

Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396

testimony - sunday hunting waterfowl-House.pages.p

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FWA



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the House Environment & Transportation Committee, March 3, 2023

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 983

Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management,
Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Favorable with Amendment

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We stand for over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

POSITION

The Horse Council supports HB 983, if amended to remove the provision opening Sundays to migratory game bird hunting, and to make clear that any plan for deer population control developed pursuant to SECTION 2 of the bill will not permit Sunday hunting on state park system lands.

The Maryland Horse Council supports and applauds many of the provisions in HB 983, including the increase in fees and especially the creation of the Wildlife Conservation Education and Outreach Program. Since the onset of the Pandemic, interest and participation in outdoor activities have skyrocketed, and increased opportunities for education about and access to outdoor experiences of all types, including hiking, birdwatching, trail riding and hunting, is an important goal.

We oppose one provision, however - the change to Section 10-410 of the Natural Resources Article **that will allow Sunday Hunting of migratory game** birds (see page 11, line 25). In recent years, there have been several bills that attempted to allow Sunday hunting of migratory game birds. All were “stand alone” bills; and all have failed.

We also have concerns about SECTION 2 of the bill, which directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), a plan to address the “overpopulation of deer in the state.” “The plan shall include: (1) the feasibility of implementing **a rotational closure hunting strategy on State land, including State park system lands and hunting on State land on Sundays.**”

None of our sources inside or outside DNR have been able to explain what “a rotational closure hunting strategy” is, and we are concerned that it implies a plan for Sunday closure of some or all state park system lands, to allow hunting - which is currently forbidden. Closing State parks to the general public on Sundays is just a really bad idea.

The horse industry in Maryland is a large, engaged and thriving constituency, and a strong economic engine: 28,000 direct equine related jobs; 16,000 properties occupying over 705,000 acres (almost 10% of Maryland’s total land area, and over 25% of Maryland’s agricultural land) The industry represents \$2.1 billion in annual economic impact, generating \$78 million in annual tax revenue. Trail riders are the largest interest group among Maryland riders, according to a recent survey by the Equiery magazine.¹ There are more horses per square mile in Maryland than in any state in the Union. (See attached fact sheet.) There are hundreds to thousands of horses in every county in the state.² Thus, legislative actions that affect the equine industry have a broad economic effect. While the Fiscal Note for this bill does not separately break out economic impact data for the migratory game bird section, Fiscal Notes on prior bills proposing Sunday hunting of migratory game birds concluded that the economic impact would be “minimal” or not material.

Passage of this bill at this time does not seem to make sense, given that the federal government reduced bag limits and season length for Canada geese and mallards in recent years due to significant declines in bird populations. According to the recently released DNR Midwinter Waterfowl Survey Results for 2023, total populations of waterfowl along the Chesapeake Bay, Potomac River and Atlantic Coastline have declined precipitously since 2018, and the Canada Goose population has declined by half.³ Moreover some waterfowl hunters and outfitters believe that seven day a week hunting is deleterious because too much hunting pressure on waterfowl drives the birds away, an effect that can last for years. ⁴

It is important to make clear that the Horse Council is not opposed to hunting. Many of our members are hunters of deer, other game mammals, and game birds.

¹ <http://equiery.com/trail-riding-tops-reader-survey/>

² According to the 2010 Maryland Equine Census (current numbers are likely about 25% higher, based on current total statewide population): Allegany 350; Baltimore 8950; Carroll 6050; Frederick 7850; Garrett 1500; Harford 6200; Howard 4350; Montgomery 7900; Washington 3750; Anne Arundel 4500; Calvert 1350; Charles 1750; Prince George’s 7100; Saint Mary’s 2300; Caroline 1300; Cecil 6200; Kent 1200; Queen Anne’s 1700; Talbot 1500; Dorchester 350; Somerset 270; Wicomico 1800; Worcester 880

³ Total waterfowl in 2018: 1,023,300, in 2023: 632,000. Canada Geese in 2018: 641,000, in 2023: 320,800.

⁴ <https://www.ducks.org/hunting/waterfowl-hunting-tips/waterfowlers-notebook-managing-hunting-pressure>

For more than 20 years, **the Maryland Horse Council has worked to ensure fair use of shared natural resources during hunting seasons**, by seeking to preserve Sundays as the one day of the week when children and adults who are hikers, birdwatchers, dog walkers, trail riders and other outdoor enthusiasts could enjoy the outdoors without concern for adverse interactions with hunters. Now we are facing a statewide bill that would allow all day Sunday hunting for waterfowl - currently not allowed at all anywhere in the state, on virtually every Sunday from September through early March and in some cases, mid-April.

The issue of recreational Sunday hunting is certainly a fraught one. In a November 2018 independent **Gonzales statewide poll**, the vast majority of respondents opposed Sunday hunting:

SUNDAY HUNTING Oppose 68.9%; Favor 21.9%

Breakdown:

Strongly Favor 13.5%

Somewhat Favor 8.4%

Somewhat Oppose 15.4%

Strongly Oppose 53.5%

These majorities opposed to Sunday hunting hold true in Baltimore Metro, Washington Metro AND Rural areas. Rural Maryland opposed Sunday hunting 60.5% vs 34.1% in favor.

It is also **sometimes argued that recreational hunters need Sundays** because they and their children have other things to do on Saturdays - a situation that plainly applies to most of Maryland's users of outdoor resources, be they hunters, birdwatchers, dog walkers, mountain bikers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and trail riders. So why should one group get special consideration - especially since, as the fiscal note shows, there is no significant economic benefit? Where is the balancing of the public good?

The number of licensed hunters in Maryland, fewer than 100,000, is just about 2% of the state's overall population of about 6 million. In 2014, the Horse Council conducted a statewide survey on Sunday hunting. **68% of respondents ride on trails on public or private land one or more days a week. And, perhaps most significantly, 85% said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters. In the Gonzales poll, 78% of respondents said they would change their plans to avoid encountering hunters.**

The Sunday hunting provision of this bill would further infringe on the rights of other users of our shared natural resources in Maryland, especially since **many riders ride around the edges of harvested crop land, which attracts migratory birds.**

The Maryland Horse Council has proposed reasonable compromises that would still allow fair use of shared natural resources, by cutting off Sunday hunting, where allowed, at **10:30 am**. This would allow hunters to hunt at favorable hours, yet still give trail riders and others plenty of Sunday access to the outdoors. This compromise has been embraced by some legislators, who have praised the Horse Council for this reasonable approach, and it has now been adopted by several counties.

We of course recognize that private land owners have some right to decide what uses they want to allow on their land. But such rights have never been absolute, as any review of zoning and land use rules can plainly establish. And, as a practical matter the public/private land distinction affords little relief since public and private tracts are often relatively small, non-contiguous, intertwined and rarely well-marked. In our survey, referenced above, 56% of respondents said they ride on trails that cross both public and private land.

We have one additional concern: Section 2 of the bill (page 11, lines 26-30 and page 12, lines 1-13), requires DNR, in consultation with MDA, to develop a plan to address deer overpopulation in the State. The plan “shall include” **“the feasibility of implementing a rotational closure hunting strategy on State land, including State park system lands and hunting on State land on Sundays.”** None of our sources inside or outside DNR have been able to explain what “a rotational closure hunting strategy” is, and we are concerned that it implies a plan for closure of some or all state park system lands to allow for Sunday hunting - which is currently forbidden.

Since the advent of the pandemic, widespread use of outdoor recreation and natural resources by the general public has only increased. For example, **attendance at Maryland State Parks in 2020 increased 45% over 2019, which was also a record year. Demand has remained strong. Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, including the distinctions between private and public lands.** In 2021, Lt. Governor Rutherford stated: “With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic changing the way we live, work, and play, more and more Marylanders are finding affordable, socially-distant, and family-friendly recreation opportunities at our parks and public lands.” Now is not the time to increase general public exposure to possible hunting risks, or to further deter the public from outdoor recreation.

Moreover, the deer population is in decline - down to about 200,000 from a high of 300,00. In a February 2022 press release, DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Paul Peditto stated “the deer population is trending toward a population level that reduces damage to agriculture and minimizes impacts on our natural communities.”

CONCLUSION

We urge the Committee to remove the provision opening Sundays to migratory game bird hunting, make clear that Sunday hunting in State Park System lands remains forbidden, and then favorably report HB 983.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)
info@mdhorsecouncil.org

The Maryland Horse Industry

Why Does It Matter?

51% of Maryland households contain at least one horse enthusiast
Maryland has 10.5 horses per square mile, more than any other state



1. Economic Impact

\$2.1 billion annual economic impact

\$80 million spent on hay, feed, and straw

\$78 million in tax revenue

2. Open Space

Over 25% of agricultural land in horse use

88,000 acres in permanent preservation

Land conserved with private dollars



3. Tourism

Four international competition venues

\$___ generated in Prince George's County

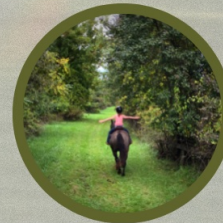
Three internationally televised events

4. Health and Wellness

40 therapeutic riding programs

10,000 children served by educational programs

\$8.4 million economic impact



5. Jobs

>28,000 industry jobs

200 equine organizations

16,000 horse farms and stables

Data source: Maryland Horse Industry Board
Copyright (c) 2022 Maryland Horse Council

HB983 Sunday Hunting - Thompson - FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Thompson

Position: FWA

March 3, 2023

Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

House Bill 983 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Position: **Favorable with Amendment**

This letter represents the views of the undersigned waterfowl hunters and club members, outfitters and conservationists on Maryland's Eastern Shore. We support House Bill 983 with an amendment to remove the Sunday waterfowl hunting provision on page 11, line 25. The Eastern Shore of Maryland was once considered the Goose Capital of the World but overhunting led to the decline of Canada Goose populations to the point of a six-year moratorium on hunting in the 1990's.

The 2019-2020 season was cut to one-bird per day for 30 days due to consecutive years of a bad hatch in Canada precipitated by weather. Situations beyond our control, such as weather, impacting goose populations compounded by hunting pressure make managing the Canada Goose population on the Eastern Shore a delicate balance. The DNR mid-winter waterfowl survey in 2018 counted 641,000 Canada Geese. In 2019, that number was 250,000 and in 2023 still only 320,000. While this is not always an indicator of overall population, these are the birds that are in Maryland being hunted. The population cannot sustain the additional hunting pressure that Sundays would result in.

It may come as a surprise that avid hunters and those of us who earn a living guiding hunting parties are opposed to Sunday hunting. The fiscal note even states it would result in increased revenue for our clubs and businesses. But that is short-sighted. We are interested in the long-term sustainability of waterfowl populations in Maryland so that we have a business and hunting tradition to pass down to the next generation.

It is no surprise that the disproportionate amount of waterfowl are harvested on Saturdays compared to weekdays. Sunday hunting coupled with the 2023-2024 proposed bag limits for Canada Geese and Mallard ducks doubling and an extended season will inevitably result in exponentially higher harvest than the species cannot support.

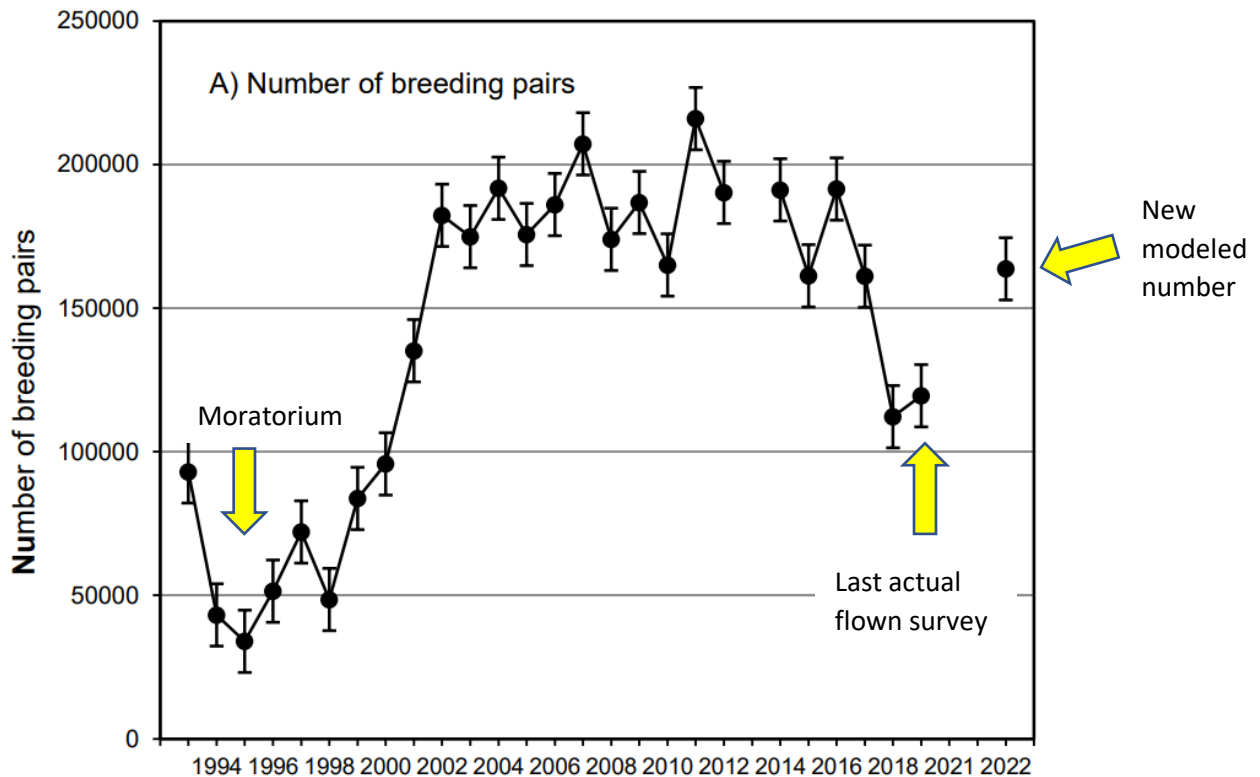
Outfitters are waterfowl managers and conservationists. We provide food and safe roost for waterfowl species. Outfitters and hunting guides likely know more about the populations and movement of waterfowl than anyone else in the state because that is our business. It is worth noting that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources did not consult or even notify the outfitter, landowner or hunting community on the Eastern Shore before supporting this legislation. There has not been an in-person public comment session on the waterfowl season since 2019 and close to zero input solicited or considered from the waterfowl outfitter community and the hunters we support.

The fact that other states have Sunday waterfowl hunting is irrelevant to whether Maryland should allow Sunday hunting. Maryland was the Goose Capital of the world because of our unique geography as home to the Chesapeake Bay and all its tributaries; as well as farmland, providing a much needed food source and a safe haven for Canada Geese and other waterfowl. Adding Sunday hunting and overhunting will put us right back in the moratorium of the 1990's.

Not only do we know waterfowl best, we also know the hunters, we are the hunters! We hunt and guide hunters daily, year after year. Adding Sunday hunting is not going to sell more hunting licenses. The same people who hunt now both will continue to hunt.

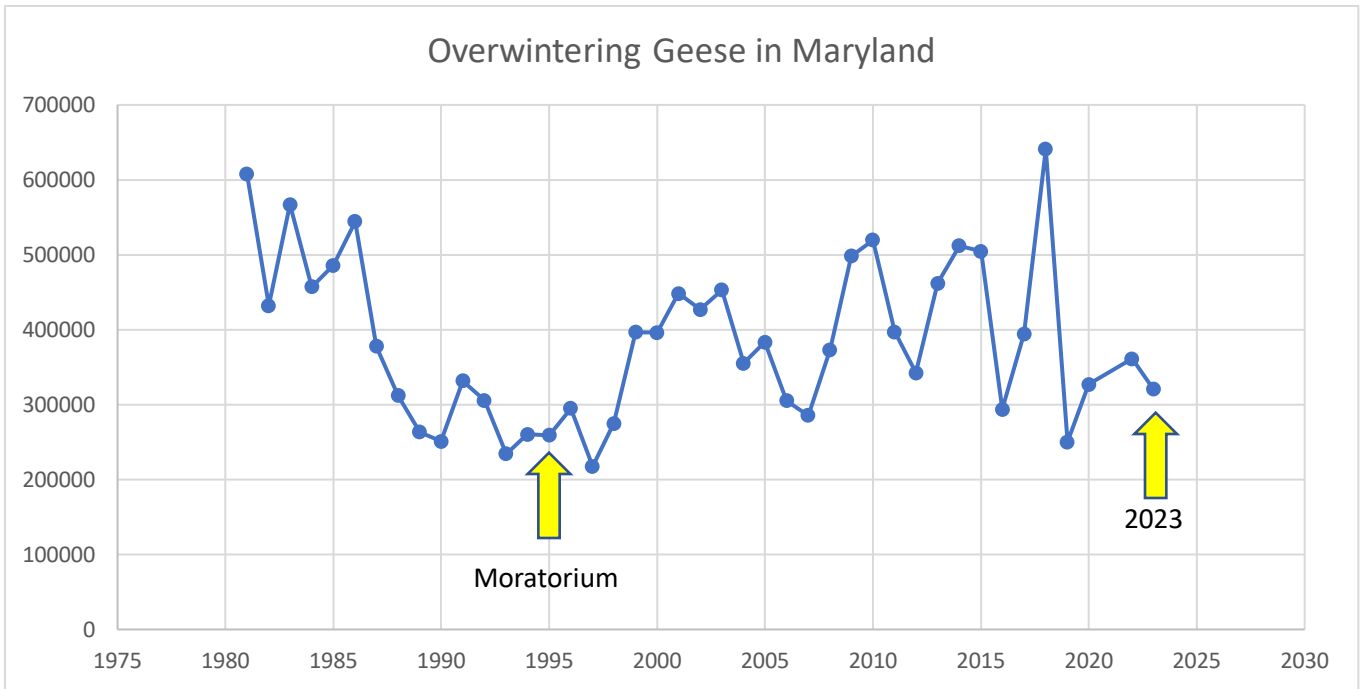
Decisions about hunting seasons and bag-limits should be based on science and what is best for the species, not purely hunter opportunity and desire.

Proponents are saying to “follow the science.” We ask that you review the science below which we believe does not support the increased hunting pressure Sunday hunting would create.



Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service. “Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey.” 2023
<https://www.fws.gov/project/waterfowl-breeding-population-and-habitat-survey>

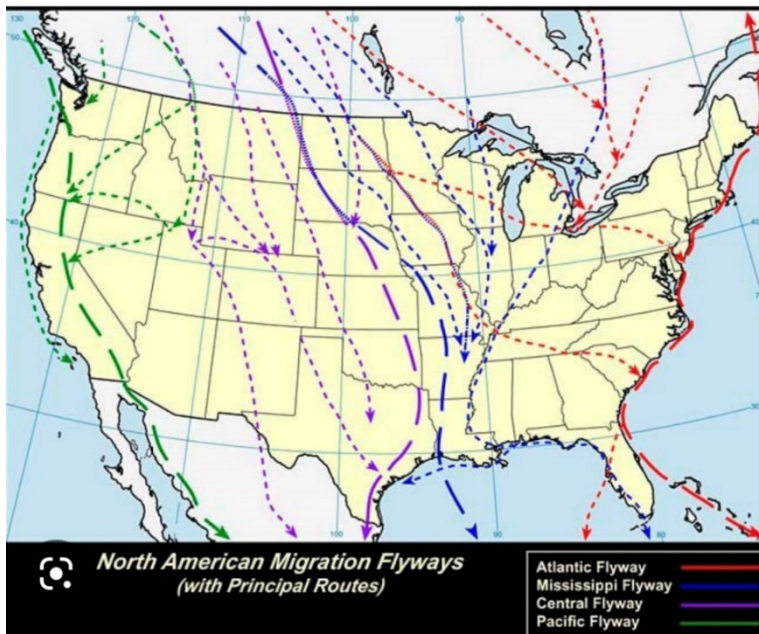
A good measure of the Canada Goose population is breeding pairs in the Ungava Bay and Punirnitug region. The graph above shows number of breeding pairs from US Fish and Wildlife Service. When the moratorium on goose hunting in Maryland went into effect in 1995, the number was 29,000 breeding pairs. The last time an actual flown survey was conducted in 2019, the number was 120,000 breeding pairs. No survey was conducted in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, a new integrated population model was used to estimate breeding pairs. This is NOT an actual observation or comparable to previous years' data. Peer reviewed science in the Journal of Methods in Ecology and Evolution states that “the reliability of parameter estimates remains underexamined, particularly when models include parameters that are not identifiable from one data source.” One year of data from this model should not be used to argue that the number of breeding pairs supports increased hunting.



Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey.

While the mid-winter survey is not always indicative of overall waterfowl population, it is a snapshot of the birds over-wintering in Maryland and therefore being hunted in the state. According to DNR, “teams counted about 632,200 waterfowl, which was higher than the 563,800 birds observed in 2022 but lower than the most recent five-year average of 682,520 birds.” Canada Geese observed was nearly half of what it was in 2018 and only 60,000 more than in 1995 when the moratorium went into effect. Total Canada Geese observed in 2023 was 320,800 which was the second lowest number since the goose hunting moratorium was lifted in 2000.

Stating that Virginia or other states with waterfowl harvest did not observe increased harvest is irrelevant to Maryland.

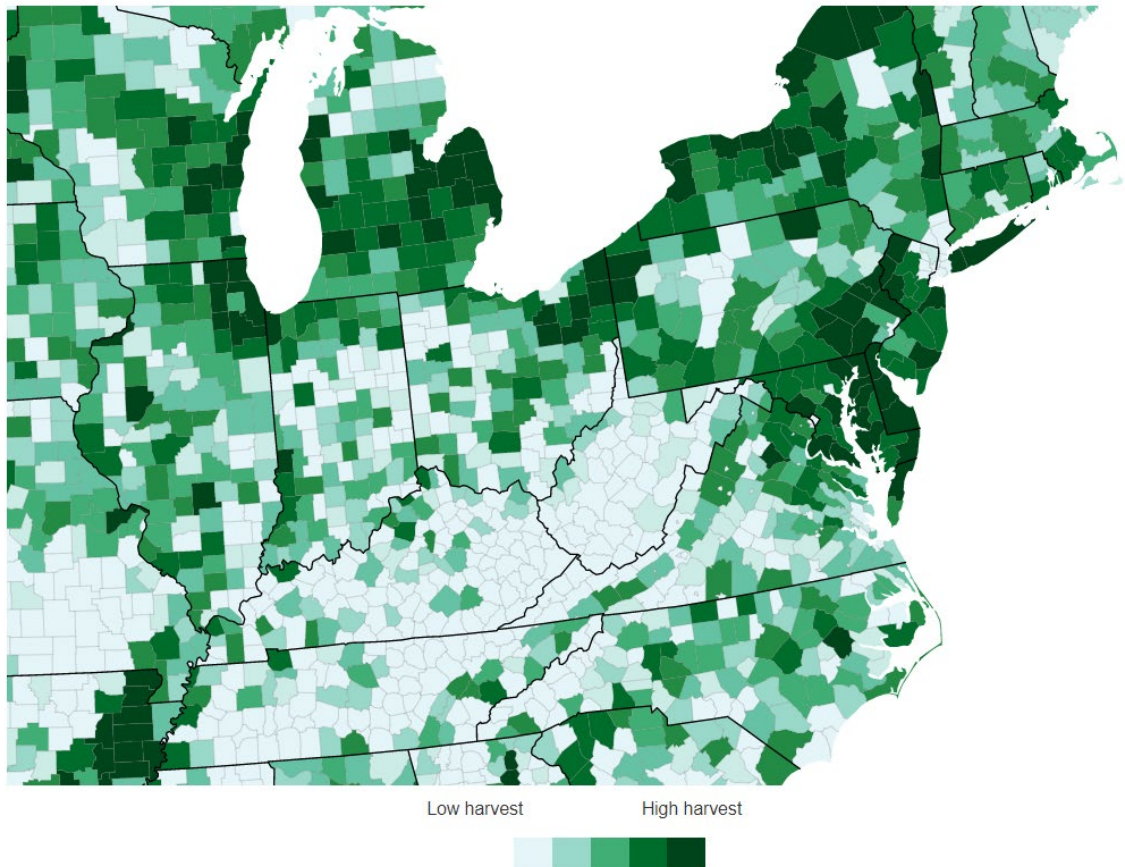


Maryland is unique when it comes to waterfowl. As you can see from the solid red line at the right of the map; the principal migration route for Canada Geese in the Atlantic Flyway converges on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. The principal migration route does not even go through inland Virginia.

Waterfowl harvest by county

Click on a county for more information, double click or mouse scroll to zoom

Duck Rankings **Goose Rankings**



*Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service: NATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD HARVEST SURVEY

<https://fws.gov/harvestsurvey/harvest-vis>

Reporting that Virginia waterfowl harvest did not increase with the addition of Sunday hunting is irrelevant to Maryland. Maryland's Eastern Shore has 6 counties in the top 25 for Canada Goose Harvest out of 3,115 counties nationwide. Virginia does not even have one county in the top 125.

The ten-year average number of goose hunters for Maryland is 10,000 more than Virginia and Maryland hunters harvest 3 more geese per week on average than Virginia.

Maryland has

16,300 duck hunters
24,400 goose hunters

Maryland ranks

31st in duck harvest
4th in goose harvest

The average hunter harvests

7 ducks in 5 days afield
7 geese in 5 days afield

Virginia has

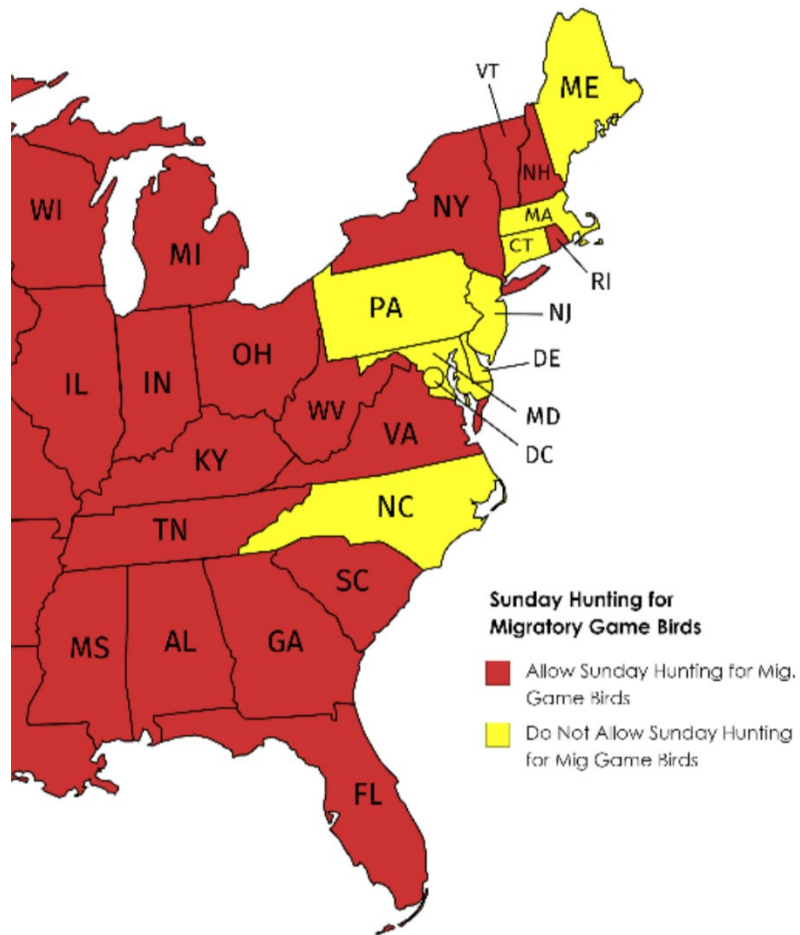
16,300 duck hunters
14,100 goose hunters

Virginia ranks

28th in duck harvest
20th in goose harvest

The average hunter harvests

8 ducks in 5 days afield
4 geese in 5 days afield



Many other Atlantic Flyway states do not allow Sunday waterfowl hunting either because the flyway is unique with the least amount of waterfowl and most densely concentrated habitat and more hunters.

We ask you please remove Sunday waterfowl hunting from House Bill 983.

Thomas Marvel - Chesapeake Guide Service
 Kent County
 410-648-5229

Chris Sherman - Barneck Outfitters
 Talbot & Dorchester Counties
 443-786-6073

Danny Harris- Spittin Feathers Guide Service
 Queen Annes & Kent Counties
 410-490-1137

Tommy & Jason Dodd- Dodd's Hunting Service
 Queen Annes County

410-739-5281

Logan Hammon- Harrisons Outfitter Service
Talbot & Dorchester Counties

410-443-9244

Guides: Danny Harrison (410-714-2200), Austin Spurry (410-829-3071), Travis Hammon (410-924-1823)

Andrew Aus- Maverick Charters LLC

Queen Annes County

443-988-8020

Mike Foster - We Got 'Em Guide Service

Queen Annes & Kent Counties

410-310-5466

Jared Thompson - Hidden Potential Farms LLC

Queen Annes County

410-490-0221

Chris & Donald Dean- Mason Branch Hunting Preserve

Queen Annes & Caroline Counties

410-924-3545

Bert Blades

Blades Guide Service- Talbot & Dorchester Counties – 410-924-1961

Hunting Bill Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Donnelly

Position: FWA

Jessica Donnelly
28544 Cove Point Rd
Kennedyville, MD 21645

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** House Bill 0983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

I support House Bill 0983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps **except the provision to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting.**

I fully support the majority of the bill, and agree that most clauses are in alignment with conservation hunting. However, the provision that would allow Sunday waterfowl hunting would be detrimental to the waterfowl populations and would be adversely affect quality of life of land owners and visitors alike on Sundays during waterfowl season.

As a resident who lives very close to hunting land, Sundays are the only days of peace in this area. While I support the rights of hunters, non hunters appreciate having one day per week that is not filled with the sounds of gunshots. Our family works hard and this day of rest and peace is something we value greatly. Since the hunters are already given the other six days, can't us non-hunters have just this one day of quiet. I greatly appreciate the time and thought given to this letter.

Therefore, I urge you to amend HB0983 to remove the allowance for Sunday waterfowl hunting.

Sincerely,

Jessica Donnelly

cc: The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

No Sunday Hunting Letter 3-1-23.pdf

Uploaded by: John Deford

Position: FWA

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT House Bill 0983**/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

This letter serves as my Support with Amendment for House Bill 0983.

The one exception that I take with the bill as drafted is the proposed allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting. The allowance of Sunday waterfowl hunting, creates the following adverse effects:

- 7 consecutive days each week of hunting over the 60-day hunting season will:
 - Place extra pressure on the State's already fragile waterfowl resources. The Atlantic Flyway has experienced enough pressure over the last few years that mallard duck limits were reduced from 4 to 2 just last season. The institution of a 7-day hunting week comes at a very bad time for thoughtful analysis of this season's proposed increase back to 4 mallards. From a purely scientific standpoint, this is not the season to implement two large scale changes. As the statisticians will tell you, change only one variable at a time to protect the integrity of your analysis.
 - More concentrated 2-day weekend hunting will now focus the activities of a larger group of hunters on the waterfowl resource and have a negative impact on the annual harvest.
- Given that the Federally mandated season for ducks is currently 60 calendar days, future seasons will have to be shortened by 10 calendar days.

- If those days are taken out of weekdays, this discriminates against seniors who have waited for their well-earned retirement to enjoy less crowded weekend hunting.
 - Further, if those days are taken out of the end of the season it will have a negative impact on the quality of hunting for all participants. Records clearly show that the harvest is greatest at the end of the season. Reducing the harvest will in turn reduce both in-state and out-of-state enthusiasm for recreational hunting in Maryland and have long term economic impact on tourism in especially the waterfowl destination counties on the Eastern Shore.
-
- Sunday is not only the Lord's Day, but a day of much needed rest for property owners and their neighbors especially from gunfire in the early morning and late afternoon.
 - It will diminish the use of private and public lands for outdoor recreation on Sundays when overlapping with hunters.

Therefore, I submit my **Support with Amendment to HB0983**, and ask that you consider not supporting Sunday waterfowl hunting in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

John E. Deford, III
Chestertown, MD
Kent County

cc: The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

HB983LThompsonMGPA_favorablewamendments.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsay Thompson

Position: FWA



Maryland Grain Producers Association
210 Fallen Horse Circle, Suite 100
Queenstown, MD 21658
Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com (p) 443-262-8491
www.marylandgrain.com

Date: March 3, 2023

HB 983 - Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Committee: Environment and Transportation

MGPA Position: **SUPPORT with Amendments**

The Maryland Grain Producers Association serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. On an annual basis, nearly a million acres of these crops are grown in Maryland.

House Bill 983 does a variety of things including increasing fees for several hunting licenses, stamps, and permits; establishing a resident and nonresident sika deer stamp and related fees; and requires DNR to work with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to develop a plan to address deer overpopulation in the State. MGPA is supportive of these provisions. The revenue generated from hunting licenses and fees goes toward management of wildlife in Maryland and with the increased acquisition of property by DNR, these funds are greatly needed in order to maintain the lands to a standard that can support wildlife without impeding on the profitability of surrounding farms.

MGPA supports two amendments:

1) Remove the authorization for Sunday waterfowl hunting on page 11, line 28 of the bill.

Many grain farmers in Maryland rent land to farm which is also rented separately for waterfowl hunting. Waterfowl hunting is inherently different than other forms of hunting because of the location often in the middle or edges of fields and the number and frequency of shots. Farmers need time during the winter to scout their small grains crops without being in conflict with waterfowl hunters.

Many grain farmers also rent their own land out for waterfowl hunting and receive revenue from doing so. They are concerned that given their observations of the populations and reports from those hunting their properties, that the waterfowl cannot sustain another weekend day, or another day in general, of hunting. We saw what happened in 1995 and the years leading up to the goose hunting moratorium and do not want to repeat history. Another moratorium would mean the loss of significant rental income for these farmers.

2) On page 12, Line 25, ADD a new (3) A PORTION OF THE INCREASE SHALL BE USED FOR THE CREATION AND FUNDING OF A FARMER COST-SHARE PROGRAM TO PLANT PRIVATE LAND FORAGE CROPS (AKA SACRIFICIAL CROPS) TO HELP CURB THE CROP LOSS ON FARMS DUE TO WILDLIFE DAMAGE WHILE INCREASING FORAGE HABITAT.

Crop damage from wildlife is over \$10 million a year in Maryland with more than 70% resulting from deer. We need all the tools in our toolbox to combat this problem.

MGPA is very supportive of House Bill 983 with these two amendments and respectfully asks for a FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS report on House Bill 983.

HB983 - RMC Support Testimony with Amendment - Hun

Uploaded by: Megan D'Arcy

Position: FWA



Susan O'Neill, Chair

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Support with Amendment of
House Bill 983 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding,
Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps
Environment and Transportation Committee
March 3, 2023

The Rural Maryland Council supports with amendment House Bill 983 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps. This comprehensive bill allows the Heritage Conservation Fund to acquire land that can be used by the general public for hunting, authorizes a sika deer hunting stamp, authorizes a nonresident attending a college or university in the state to purchase a resident hunting license and repeals the prohibition of migratory game birds on Sunday as well as other provisions related to Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps. The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) supports new economic opportunities related to outdoor recreation in the State. Outdoor recreation-including hunting-is a major economic force in rural Maryland. According to *Hunting Works for Maryland*, in 2018, hunting generated \$401 million in economic activity with the majority spent at locally owned businesses across the State. The According the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the new U.S. data shows that the outdoor recreation economy accounts for 1.9 percent (\$454.0 billion) of the current-dollar gross domestic product for the nation in 2021. HB983 will increase State hunting revenues by providing access to more land and requiring stamps for additional animals, such as the sika deer (pronounced SEE-kuh).

The Council is generally in favor of the HB983 with one exception – the provision that permits migratory bird hunting on Sunday and ask that it be amended to remove this provision.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support with amendment of House Bill 983.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”

House Bill 983
Amendments

1. On page 1, lines 13 and 14, strike “authorizing a person to hunt migratory game birds on Sundays”
2. On page 11, line 25, keep the word “not”
3. On page 12, line 2, strike “and hunting on State land on Sundays”

Written House Testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Heller

Position: FWA

Peter D Heller Jr
7383 Maple Grove Road
Chestertown Md 21620
pheller@cbchesapeake.com

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** House Bill 0983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

I support House Bill 0983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps **except the provision to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting.**

I am a lifelong resident of Chestertown Md, avid waterfowl hunter, conservationist, and land owner. I fully support the majority of the bill, and agree that most clauses are in alignment with conservation hunting. However, the provision that would allow Sunday waterfowl hunting would be detrimental to the waterfowl populations and would adversely affect the quality of life for land owners and visitors alike on Sundays during waterfowl season. At some point we have to put the resource ahead of man's wants if we want to continue to enjoy the outdoors and rich waterfowl heritage in our great state.

Therefore, I urge you to amend HB0983 to remove the allowance for Sunday waterfowl hunting.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Heller Jr.

cc: The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

HB0983 Support With Amendment (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Dion

Position: FWA

Sara Dion
Chestertown, MD
Sara.elizabeth.r19@gmail.com

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** House Bill 0983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

I support House Bill 0983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps **except the provision to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting.**

I fully support the majority of the bill, and agree that most clauses are in alignment with conservation hunting. However, the provision that would allow Sunday waterfowl hunting would be detrimental to the waterfowl populations and would adversely affect quality of life of land owners and visitors alike on Sundays during waterfowl season.

Therefore, I urge you to amend HB0983 to remove the allowance for Sunday waterfowl hunting.

Sincerely,

Sara Dion

cc: The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

HB0983 letter final (1).docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Marvel

Position: FWA

Thomas Marvel
13011 Ireland's Corner Rd.
Galena, Md. 21635

tmarvel63@gmail.com

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Taxation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** House Bill 0983/Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

I support House Bill 0983, Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps **except the provision to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting.**

I fully support the majority of the bill, and agree that most of the newly presented items are in alignment with conservation hunting. However, the provision that would allow Sunday waterfowl hunting would be detrimental to the waterfowl populations and would adversely affect quality of life of land owners and visitors alike on Sundays during waterfowl season.

Therefore, I urge you to amend HB0983 to remove the allowance for Sunday waterfowl hunting.

Sincerely,

Thomas Marvel

cc: The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Dana Jones
The Honorable Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler

sunday hunt house.pdf

Uploaded by: Webb Johnson

Position: FWA

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve,

HB983/SB327

Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for your time today. I am Webb Johnson vice President of Maryland outfitters and guides association and President of Quakerneck Outfitters. I'm here to testify on SB0327/HB983. We understand the need for more money to Maryland's DNR, Wildlife and Heritage, and Natural resource police. Buy the increase in the license, stamps and the addition of the new Sitka stamp. However, we are **AGAINST** – the Hunting of Migratory Game Birds on Sunday. Waterfowl hunting will have a limited to no effect on license sales and recruitment.

Using statics from the last state to allow Sunday waterfowl hunting , Virginia in 2013, they saw only a year or two of increased to flat license sales (USFW) before they continued their downward trends. Today there are 46,000 less license (USFW) holders in Virginia than in 2013!

Increase in Hunting Pressure

This is among the main reasons that we see less Canada Geese wintering in MD and the hardest to quantify. With maturing of Canada Goose hunting, we are seeing 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. I wish I had time to create 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, will hasten the Northerly retreat of our beloved Canadian Geese and ducks.

The just released 2023 mid -winter waterfowl survey showed a 40,000-bird decrease (MD DNR) in population from 2022 despite the "reported" increase in the mated bird count. Many geese can now be seen moving back north before the end of January due to pressure. Unless heavy snow and ice block their northerly progression, which is increasingly uncommon these days.

More pressure/harvest=less movement=less opportunity=less hunter recruitment=less license/stamp sales=less income for the Wildlife and Heritage Service.

Less Canadian Geese in Maryland

This will force higher and earlier monetary contributions supporting DNR from Maryland's General Fund.

We support SB 327 / HB 983, WITH AMENDMENT deleting - the SUNDAY HUNTING of MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS.

Thank you for your time, I will be happy to answer any questions.

Webb Johnson