

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