

# 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*

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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