

HB 1118 - Repealing Time Restriction – UNFAVORABLE

I am writing to oppose HB1118 regarding Sunday hunting. I live on a horse farm in Caroline County directly across from the Tuckahoe State Park and am an active member of the equestrian community. The trails, woods and fields in the park are multi-purpose and are used extensively by horseback riders, hikers, bicyclists, bird watchers, families with their dogs and baby carriages and many others just out to enjoy nature. This has increased noticeably since the pandemic. Hunters of all species also frequent this and many other parks and public lands. While the other users of these lands all happily co-exist, the hunters are the group that represent potential danger to all the others. And yet hunting licenses are issued to only 2% of Maryland's population (about 119,000 people). 84% of the population has never hunted and nearly 69% of all Marylanders oppose Sunday hunting.

Until recently hunting was not permitted on Sundays, but a compromise was reached whereby Sunday hunting is allowed but only up to 10:30 a.m. thus leaving the remainder of the day to be enjoyed in safety. This smallest percent of the population clearly knows how to get their voices heard.

As an active trail rider, I am always concerned about being near gun fire. Horses tend to spook at loud sudden noises and present a danger to the rider. As they are large animals they can also be mistaken for deer from a distance.

The deer population in Maryland is stable or declining and does not exceed the capacity of our natural resources. Bag limits are not set to increase so hunters will still be entitled to kill their allotment of deer.

Many nature enthusiasts already feel obliged to change their outdoor plans to avoid being around those who hunt. While everyone is entitled to enjoy the great outdoors the way they choose there should still be at least 1 day per week when the vast majority can do so safely.

Hunters argue they need to be able to take their children hunting on Sundays as they work all week, and the kids are in school. The super majority of Marylanders are in the same position, working all week and children in school. And, on a personal note, I cannot fathom why parents would feel the need to teach their children how to kill another living being. They are no longer dependent on hunting to put food on the table. Please leave the 10:30 hunting cutoff in place so the rest of us can safely enjoy Sundays outdoors in peace.

Respectfully submitted,

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