



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

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

In the House Environment & Transportation Committee, February 8, 2023

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 188
Natural Resources - Wildlife Advisory Commission - Membership - **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 work for over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

We support the intent and effect of HB 188 to expand the diversity of voices and viewpoints on the Wildlife Advisory Commission. For example, the largest segment of horseback riders in Maryland is trail riders, and one of the many pleasures of that activity is the opportunity to view wildlife in their habitat, i.e., as members of the Passive Wildlife Recreation Community.

There is another segment of the equestrian community that has had representation on the Commission, that of the mounted fox chasers, foot pack chasers, etc. Those individuals and groups form a significant portion of Maryland's active recreational and sporting wildlife activity participants. Now that additional, specifically designated seats are being enumerated, we think it is important that their continued representation be codified.

Therefore we respectfully request that HB 188 be amended as follows:

On page 2, Lines 9 et seq.:

C. ~~THE WILDLIFE PRESERVATION~~ CONSERVATION COMMUNITY; ~~AND~~

D. THE PASSIVE WILDLIFE RECREATION COMMUNITY; AND

E. THE MOUNTED AND UNMOUNTED CHASING COMMUNITIES.

With the above amendments, MHC requests a favorable report on HB 188.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

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