



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