



*Susan O'Neill, Chair*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

Testimony in Support with Amendment of  
House Bill 983 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding,  
Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
March 3, 2023

**The Rural Maryland Council supports with amendment House Bill 983 – Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps.** This comprehensive bill allows the Heritage Conservation Fund to acquire land that can be used by the general public for hunting, authorizes a sika deer hunting stamp, authorizes a nonresident attending a college or university in the state to purchase a resident hunting license and repeals the prohibition of migratory game birds on Sunday as well as other provisions related to Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps. The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) supports new economic opportunities related to outdoor recreation in the State. Outdoor recreation-including hunting-is a major economic force in rural Maryland. According to *Hunting Works for Maryland*, in 2018, hunting generated \$401 million in economic activity with the majority spent at locally owned businesses across the State. The According the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the new U.S. data shows that the outdoor recreation economy accounts for 1.9 percent (\$454.0 billion) of the current-dollar gross domestic product for the nation in 2021. HB983 will increase State hunting revenues by providing access to more land and requiring stamps for additional animals, such as the sika deer (pronounced SEE-kuh).

The Council is generally in favor of the HB983 with one exception – the provision that permits migratory bird hunting on Sunday and ask that it be amended to remove this provision.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support with amendment of House Bill 983.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”

House Bill 983  
Amendments

1. On page 1, lines 13 and 14, strike “authorizing a person to hunt migratory game birds on Sundays”
2. On page 11, line 25, keep the word “not”
3. On page 12, line 2, strike “and hunting on State land on Sundays”