



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB188 “Natural Resources–Wildlife Advisory Commission–Membership”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 8, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports HB188, which would require the Governor to diversify the Wildlife Advisory Commission by appointing an academic researcher to the Commission and require membership to include representation from the farming, hunting or fishing, wildlife preservation, and passive wildlife recreation communities.

The Wildlife Advisory Commission serves to advise the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on all of Maryland’s wildlife matters. It is their responsibility to not only oversee hunting and fishing licensing and game populations, but also serve as advisors on other issues such as monitoring and addressing epizootic diseases, promoting wildlife and habitat conservation, educating the public about Maryland’s wildlife, collaborating with farmers, fostering science and research, and generally protecting and conserving Maryland’s wildlife resources.

To properly address the broad range of responsibilities of the Commission, the representatives must have a varied background and represent different stakeholders. By adding non-consumptive and academic representation to the Commission, we allow for a more comprehensive view of hunting and fishing in Maryland and help ensure increased commitment by the DNR to a wider range of issues.

The Sierra Club supports responsible hunting and fishing, with care given to protect vulnerable wildlife from becoming endangered or extinct. Given that HB188 will expand the voices on the Wildlife Advisory Commission to include a diverse array of outdoor stakeholders, the end goal of this legislation will serve to promote the goals of the Sierra Club in ensuring increased conservation and protection of our wildlife and ecosystems.

As Marylanders, we are fortunate to have an abundance of diverse wildlife that live in our unique ecosystems stretching from the Chesapeake Bay to the Appalachian Mountains. We must be proactive with responsible management and conservation so that a broad array of individuals can access and enjoy these resources for future generations to come. Therefore, we strongly encourage a favorable report for HB188.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.