



Maryland Forests Association, Inc.

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Maryland's voice for forest, wildlife, and natural resource management

February 12, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair
Maryland Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB847- Dorchester County- Sunday Hunting- Repeal of Time Restrictions

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Forests Association (MFA) supports the passage of SB847

The Maryland Forests Association, Inc. (MFA) is a non-profit 501 c(3) membership-driven organization established in 1976. We represent the entire forest community statewide. A large portion of our membership is comprised of family forest land owners and hunt clubs.

There are many threats to forests that act gradually and cumulatively and over time that are changing the health, composition, and resilience of our forests. Deer have an enormous impact on forest diversity. Studies show that deer damage from understory browse eliminates preferred species such as oak and hickory. White-tail deer and sika populations have risen dramatically due to a lack of natural predators and protective game laws. The increase in deer population across the Eastern Shore has led to a severe loss of the forest understory, which will have implications for the future of the forest. In rural areas such as Dorchester County, fencing deer out or trying to shelter trees across large tracts isn't feasible. However, resolving the threat of deer damage by allowing hunters to have more opportunities is a simple resolution to maintaining forest diversity. Therefore, we support lifting the 10:30 AM cut-off time for Sunday deer Hunting in Dorchester County.

In closing, our forests are our greatest renewable resource, but they sometimes need intervention to keep them productive and healthy. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB847. Thank you, and please feel free to contact me, Beth Hill, at 410-463-1755 or via email at beth@mdforests.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth D. Hill
Executive Director
Maryland Forests Association