

MFA SB847 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Beth Hill

Position: FAV



Maryland Forests Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 332

Linkwood, MD 21835

410-463-1755

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

SB847 Hunters of Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: Johnny Mautz

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

February 16, 2024

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 847 (Dorchester County – Sunday Hunting – Repeal of Time Restrictions)

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite almost 100% of all wildlife management and research costs through their purchase of hunting licenses, stamps, and equipment. For the record: (1) hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists; and (2) hunting in Maryland is a powerful economic engine as noted in the link below.

<https://sportsmensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-Economic-Impact-of-Hunting-and-Shooting-Technical-Report-V2.pdf>

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net])
William R. Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

HONORABLE BRIAN J. FELDMAN
CHAIR, SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HONORABLE MEMBERS:

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC support Senate Bill 847 which would repeal the statutory requirement to end Sunday hunting of deer at 10:30 am in Dorchester County.

Maryland lawmakers acknowledged there is an "overpopulation of deer in the State" via enactment of Chapters 543/544 of 2023 (*link below*); thereby, directing DNR and MDA to develop a mitigation plan by December 1, 2023. An excerpt from the Report concerning Sunday deer hunting reads as follows:

"Along with limiting what Sundays are open for deer hunting, some counties also require deer hunters to end hunting at 10:30 am. A total of 11 counties currently have these restrictions. This cutoff can impede hunter success since evening hours often can be more productive for deer hunting. Likewise, other Sunday morning activities, such as church, may prevent hunters from being able to participate.

Limiting the number of Sundays and restricting the hours available to hunt on these days traditionally have been instituted to afford other user groups the ability to use lands they otherwise feel uncomfortable on while hunting is occurring. However, deer hunting is a

demonstrably safe activity and numerous other states offer season-long Sunday hunting opportunities with little to no user group conflicts. Likewise, these conflicts appear to be rare in Maryland during Monday – Saturday when hunting and other recreational activities are occurring at the same time.

For private lands, Sunday hunting in theory should only impact other user groups if the landowner decides to allow hunting on that day. There has been legislation around additional Sunday hunting and amending the 10:30am cutoff, which would be beneficial to managing the state's deer population. Expanding Sunday hunting on public lands to include more than the eight counties where it is currently allowed, and expanding to other public properties including state parks, would also benefit deer management and landowners. A change in statute is required to add any additional Sundays and the statute would have to be amended if the goal is to allow Sunday hunting on state park lands.”

Clearly, Sunday hunting of deer is recognized as a critical tool in the management of Maryland's deer population.

Chapter 543 Acts of 2023 (Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps)

A key recommendation in the Report states the following:

“Addressing legislation that prohibits or restricts Sunday deer hunting in order to provide more deer hunting opportunities. This should be addressed at the private and public land level, including State parks.”

Clearly, Sunday hunting of deer is recognized as a critical tool in the management of Maryland's deer population.

Further arguments in favor of lifting Dorchester's Sunday deer hunting 10:30 am hunting prohibition: (1) private property rights are at issue; and (2) many properties are not easily accessible in early morning without moving deer off the property making 10:30 am worthless for taking more deer on Sundays.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, Sunday hunting of deer has proven a measurably effective way in helping control Maryland's deer population. According to DNR (link below) about 10% of the 70,845 deer taken during the 2021-2022 season were taken on Sundays. More opportunities afield – especially those working families with only weekends or Sundays available to them for hunting purposes – means more youth afield, more deer harvested, and more money spent in the State and local economy. Removing the 10:30 am arbitrary prohibition in Dorchester will have a measurable trifecta impact.

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Maryland-Big-Game-Report-2021-22.pdf>



SB847 County Council of Dorchester Co..pdf

Uploaded by: Johnny Mautz

Position: FAV

COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
P.O. BOX 26
CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND 21613
PHONE: (410) 228-1700
FAX: (410) 228-9641

GEORGE L. PFEFFER, JR., PRESIDENT
MIKE DETMER, VICE PRESIDENT
ROB KRAMER, JR.
WILLIAM V. NICHOLS
RICKY C. TRAVERS



JEFF POWELL
INTERIM COUNTY MANAGER
MACLEOD LAW GROUP LLC
COUNTY ATTORNEY

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Senator
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 847 “Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions”

Dear Senator Feldman:

On behalf of the Dorchester County Council, I respectfully offer its support for Senate Bill 847 entitled, “Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions” for the purpose of repealing the time restrictions that apply to Sunday hunting in Dorchester County; and generally relating to Sunday hunting.

Repealing hunting time restrictions on Sundays in Dorchester County will provide additional aid in reducing overpopulated areas. Also, this will provide ample time for all to participate in the sport. By increasing the number of hunters, it will ultimately increase economic growth in rural areas as these individuals often times visit the outlying family owned businesses. Respectfully, we ask that you look favorably upon this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter of support. If you have any questions, please contact the Council’s Office at (410) 228-1700.

Sincerely,

DORCHESTER COUNTY COUNCIL

George L. Pfeffer, Jr.
President

glp/ib

cc: The Honorable Johnny Mautz, Senator
The Honorable Christopher T. Adams, Delegate
The Honorable Thomas S. Hutchinson, Delegate
The Honorable Sheree Sample-Hughes, Delegate

SB847 Dorchester Farm Bureau.pdf

Uploaded by: Johnny Mautz

Position: FAV

Mautz, Johnny Senator

From: V Dyer <dyervk422@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2024 4:59 PM
To: Mautz, Johnny Senator
Subject: DORCHESTER FARM BUREAU SUPPORT OF SB847

February 12, 2024

Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Honorable Cheryl C. Pagan, Vice Chair
MD Education , energy, and the Environmental Committee

Miller Senate Bldg.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Ref: SB847

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chairman Kagan, and members of the committee

The Dorchester Farm Bureau supports the passage of SB 847.

Dorchester Farm Bureau is a 501c3 member driven organization established in 1955. We represent a large portion of Dorchester Farmers and farm land owners.

White tail deer and sika populations have risen drastically due to lack of natural predators and protective game laws. The increase in deer population is responsible for tremendous crop damage. Crop damage translates into huge financial losses to our farmers. Losses of crops that could be feeding the hungry. We support extending the Sunday 10:30am hunting time to dark.

In closing, Extending hunting opportunities is one way to reduce this damage and our overpopulation problem. We ask for a favorable report on SB 847. Please feel free to contact me at Dorchester Farm Bureau, POBox 1293, Cambridge MD 21613.

Sincerely,

Valarie Brinsfield
President Dorchester Farm Bureau

SB847 MD Forests Assoc, Inc..pdf

Uploaded by: Johnny Mautz

Position: FAV



Maryland Forests Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 332
Linkwood, MD 21835
410-463-1755

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

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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

SB0847_FAV_mgoldstein 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Mathew Goldstein

Position: FAV



Secular Maryland

<https://secularmaryland.dorik.io> secularmaryland@tutanota.com

February 27, 2024

SB 847 - FAV

Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions

Dear Chair Brian J. Feldman, Vice-Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Secular Maryland supports bills that reduce or eliminate Sunday activity restrictions, including this bill.

Maryland bans, or otherwise limits, the sale of automobiles and other vehicles (Business Regulation Code Ann. §18-101), and the sale of alcohol (Alcoholic Beverages Code Ann. §11-102), on Sundays. Financial institutions must be closed on Sunday (Financial Institutions Code Ann. §5-704). Maryland is one of eleven states where hunting is still banned or otherwise restricted on Sunday (Natural Resources Code Ann. §10-410). We disagree with the state level Sunday activity restriction defaults. Counties (and Baltimore) have requested, and usually obtained, a variety of exemptions from some of these Sunday activity restrictions from the General Assembly.

Sunday is a special day of the week for many Christians. For other citizens the day of rest and worship may be Friday or Saturday, and for some citizens there is no god to worship or no fixed day of rest each week. Maryland law can be, and should be, more accommodating to this diversity of belief among its citizens. Legally banning business and leisure activity on Sundays favors a majority religious practice. Favoring a majority religious practice is not a proper goal of the laws. To the fullest extent feasible, our laws should confer equal accommodations to minority religious practices along with non-religious and anti-religion beliefs.

The decisions regarding which day to hunt, to buy or sell alcohol, to buy or sell vehicles, to initiate and process financial transactions, etc., are best left to the citizens. State lawmakers can require one day off every week without specifying a particular day of the week by delegating that decision to the affected businesses. Hunting restrictions to accommodate horseback riding, hiking, and the like during the hunting season can be defined for particular hours throughout the week or rotated to different days for each

week of the month instead of being on every Sunday.

Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
3838 Early Glow Ln
Bowie, MD

Support - SB847 Dorchester Sunday Hunting.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

February 26, 2024

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support of SB847 - Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions

On behalf of the member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in favor of SB847 Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions. This bill would remove the 10:30am time restriction for those hunting game birds and game mammals in Dorchester County. This will allow Dorchester County to have all-day hunting on three Sundays during the firearms season, two Sundays during the muzzleloader season and the Sundays during the bow season.

The Department of Natural Resources continues to stress that Sunday hunting is one of the most productive deer management tools they have to offer. Opening more opportunities for hunters to harvest over-populations of deer on private land will assist with curbing the ever-increasing crop loss due to deer damage. Per the 2011 Maryland Ag Statistics survey, deer accounted for \$7.7 million in crop losses in Maryland annually. Maryland Farm Bureau supports uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB847

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', with a long horizontal line above it.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, (443) 878-4045 with any questions

Hunters of Maryland - SB 847 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

February 27, 2024

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 847 (Dorchester County – Sunday Hunting – Repeal of Time Restrictions)

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite almost 100% of all wildlife management and research costs through their purchase of hunting licenses, stamps, and equipment. For the record: (1) hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists; and (2) hunting in Maryland is a powerful economic engine as noted in the link below.

<https://sportsmensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-Economic-Impact-of-Hunting-and-Shooting-Technical-Report-V2.pdf>

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net])
William R. Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

HONORABLE BRIAN J. FELDMAN
CHAIR, SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HONORABLE MEMBERS:

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC support Senate Bill 847 which would repeal the statutory requirement to end Sunday hunting of deer at 10:30 am in Dorchester County.

Maryland lawmakers acknowledged there is an "overpopulation of deer in the State" via enactment of Chapters 543/544 of 2023 (*link below*); thereby, directing DNR and MDA to develop a mitigation plan by December 1, 2023. An excerpt from the Report concerning Sunday deer hunting reads as follows:

"Along with limiting what Sundays are open for deer hunting, some counties also require deer hunters to end hunting at 10:30 am. A total of 11 counties currently have these restrictions. This cutoff can impede hunter success since evening hours often can be more productive for deer hunting. Likewise, other Sunday morning activities, such as church, may prevent hunters from being able to participate.

Limiting the number of Sundays and restricting the hours available to hunt on these days traditionally have been instituted to afford other user groups the ability to use lands they otherwise feel uncomfortable on while hunting is occurring. However, deer hunting is a

demonstrably safe activity and numerous other states offer season-long Sunday hunting opportunities with little to no user group conflicts. Likewise, these conflicts appear to be rare in Maryland during Monday – Saturday when hunting and other recreational activities are occurring at the same time.

For private lands, Sunday hunting in theory should only impact other user groups if the landowner decides to allow hunting on that day. There has been legislation around additional Sunday hunting and amending the 10:30am cutoff, which would be beneficial to managing the state's deer population. Expanding Sunday hunting on public lands to include more than the eight counties where it is currently allowed, and expanding to other public properties including state parks, would also benefit deer management and landowners. A change in statute is required to add any additional Sundays and the statute would have to be amended if the goal is to allow Sunday hunting on state park lands."

https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2023RS/chapters_noln/Ch_543_sb0327E.pdf

A key recommendation in the Report states the following:

"Addressing legislation that prohibits or restricts Sunday deer hunting in order to provide more deer hunting opportunities. This should be addressed at the private and public land level, including State parks."

Clearly, Sunday hunting of deer is recognized as a critical tool in the management of Maryland's deer population.

Further arguments in favor of lifting Dorchester's Sunday deer hunting 10:30 am hunting prohibition: (1) private property rights are at issue; (2) many properties are not easily accessible in early morning without moving deer off the property making 10:30 am worthless for taking more deer on Sundays; (3) support from the Dorchester County Council (February 6, 2024); and (4) support from the Dorchester County Farm Bureau (February 12, 2024)...*both of these latter statements are herein attached.*

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, Sunday hunting of deer has proven a measurably effective way in helping control Maryland's deer population. According to DNR (link below) about 10% of the 70,845 deer taken during the 2021-2022 season were taken on Sundays. More opportunities afield – especially those working families with only weekends or Sundays available to them for hunting purposes – means more youth afield, more deer harvested, and more money spent in the State and local economy. Removing the 10:30 am arbitrary prohibition in Dorchester will have a measurable trifecta impact.

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Maryland-Big-Game-Report-2021-22.pdf>



COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
P.O. BOX 26
CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND 21613
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GEORGE L. PFEFFER, JR., PRESIDENT JEFF
INTERIM COUNTY MANAGER
MIKE DETMER, VICE PRESIDENT

ROB KRAMER, JR. MACLEOD LAW GROUP LLC

WILLIAM V. NICHOLS

RICKY C. TRAVERS



POWELL

COUNTY ATTORNEY

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Thomas S. Hutchinson, Delegate
6 Bladen Street
Room 308
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Proposed Bill “Sunday Hunting- Repeal of Time Restrictions”

Dear Delegate Hutchinson:

On behalf of the Dorchester County Council, I respectfully offer its support for the proposed bill entitled, “Sunday Hunting- Repeal of Time Restrictions” for the purpose of repealing the time restrictions that apply to Sunday hunting in Dorchester County and generally relating to Sunday hunting in Dorchester County.

Repealing hunting time restrictions on Sundays in Dorchester County will provide additional aid in reducing overpopulated areas. Also, this will provide ample time for all to participate in the sport. By increasing the number of hunters, it will ultimately increase economic growth in rural areas as these individuals often times visit the outlying family owned businesses. Respectfully, we ask that you look favorably upon this proposed bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter of support. If you have any questions, please contact the Council’s Office at (410) 228-1700.

Sincerely,

DORCHESTER COUNTY COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'George L. Pfeffer, Jr.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

George L. Pfeffer, Jr.

February 14, 2024

THE HONORABLE BRIAN J. FELDMAN
Chair, Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

THE HONORABLE CHERYL C. KAGAN
Vice-Chair, Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

**Subject: Support for Senate Bill 847 (Dorchester County – Sunday Hunting –
Repeal of Time Restrictions)**

HONORABLE MEMBERS:

The Dorchester County Farm Bureau supports passage of Senate Bill 847 that would lift the 10:30 am Sunday deer hunting cut off time in Dorchester County.

Recognition that Maryland has a deer problem is evidenced by enactment of Chapter 543, Acts of 2023 which contains the following provision:

“On or before December 1, 2023, the Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, shall develop a plan to address the overpopulation of deer in the State”.

Chapter 543 Acts of 2023 (Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Recreation – Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps)

A key recommendation in DNR's Report is the following:

“Address legislation that prohibits or restricts Sunday deer hunting in order to provide more deer hunting opportunities. This should be addressed at the private and public land level, including state parks.”

[https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/DNR/SB327Ch543HB983Ch544\(2\)\(2023\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/DNR/SB327Ch543HB983Ch544(2)(2023).pdf)

Clearly, Sunday hunting of deer is recognized as a critical tool in the management of Maryland's deer population. The Dorchester County Farm Bureau respectfully asks the Committee for a favorable report on SB 847 because the proposal is not only consistent with and responsive to the Administration's support of expanded Sunday hunting of deer, but also because Dorchester County's overpopulation of deer warrants such action.

Sincerely,


President, Dorchester County Farm Bureau

hunting accident report 2007-2023.pages.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: UNF

Excerpts from 16 years of DNR's Annual Hunting Accident Reports

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/pages/hunting-incident-reports.aspx>

2023

— A 59-year-old Talbot County Deer hunter was shot by another hunter from approximately 105 yards away. The victim was standing in the woods wearing an orange jacket when he heard a gunshot and felt pain in his side. The subject who fired the shot was aiming at a deer and missed causing the bullet to travel beyond his intended target striking the victim. The hunters were both hunting from the ground and could not see each other at the time the shot was fired.

— A 25-year-old Somerset County Deer hunter was shot in the leg by another hunter while walking out of the woods. The victim was walking to his truck at approximately 1745 hours when another hunter thought he was a deer and shot the subject with his bow.

2022

— A 48-year-old Worcester County Squirrel Hunter was hunting with his 15-year-old son. They were walking approximately 100 yards apart when the subjects' son shot at a squirrel on the ground. The Rimfire .22 long rifle caliber bullet ricocheted off the ground and struck the victim in his left shoulder. The trees and brush between the father and son made each of them unaware of the others location.

— A 46-year-old Howard County Turkey Hunter was shot in the face and chest by a 75-year-old Howard County Turkey Hunter. The 75-year-old subject saw the other hunter approximately 40 yards away and thought it was a turkey.

2021

— A 58-year old Washington County Deer Hunter (Firearms Season) was actively hunting in a wooded area when they were struck in the thigh with a round from another firearm. NRP investigation revealed that the victim was shot in the thigh by a 10-year old relative in their hunting party who had mistaken the victim for game. Victim was transported to the hospital for non-life threatening injuries. No charges were filed against the shooter.

2020

--- A Frederick County resident observed damage to the exterior of their residence, which was consistent with that of pellet strikes from a shotgun. While investigating officers located no hunting activity in the area, the incident did occur during the end of spring turkey season. No further suspect / hunter information was developed throughout the investigation.

— A Kent County resident observed damage to their vehicle's windshield, which was consistent with that of pellet strikes from a shotgun. Nearby waterfowl hunters were interviewed and denied any involvement, which was confirmed through an on-scene investigation. The area in question is known for waterfowl hunting and there were reports of numerous shots leading up to the incident. No further suspect / hunter information was developed throughout the investigation.

— A Kent County waterfowl hunter, returning from a hunt, observed damage to their parked vehicle's tailgate, which consisted of a rifle round lodged into the plastic molding of said tailgate. Nearby waterfowl hunters were interviewed and denied any involvement, which was confirmed through an on-scene investigation. The area in

question is known for waterfowl hunting. No further suspect / hunter information was developed throughout the investigation.

— A 17 year-old Wicomico County Waterfowl Hunter was underway in a vessel with other hunters when they were struck with shotgun pellets. Investigation revealed that other members of the victim's hunting party were on shore and approximately 50-60 yards away when a 20 year-old fired a shot towards the victim's vessel in an alleged attempt to scare him and his hunting party. The victim sustained non-life threatening injuries. Natural resources / criminal charges were filed against the shooter in this incident.

— A 14 year-old Somerset County Turkey Hunter (Firearms - Junior Hunt Days) was on foot and stalking turkeys with other juvenile hunters and under adult supervision. As the juveniles were walking 50-70 yards apart, under thick tree cover and out of sight from one another, a 14-year old shooter observed a turkey and fired their shotgun twice at said game. As a result, shotgun pellets ultimately struck the victim. The shooter was not aware that the victim was in the background. The victim sustained non-life threatening injuries.

2019

---- A 61-year-old Washington County Woodchuck Hunter was shooting from the front of their residence off a picnic table for support when one shot went errant and struck a person fishing at an adjacent pond, grazing their shoulder. The victim was approximately two tenths of a mile away obscured by heavy brush and tree cover. Rimfire .22 long rifle ammunition from a rifle was the implement used.

--- An unknown Washington County Deer Hunter (Archery season) shot a crossbow bolt through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victims driveway. Apparently the shot took place after sunset the evening before the damage was observed. Deer frequent the lawn of this residence and other residences within the neighborhood most evenings. No suspect(s) were observed at the time of the damage.

---- A Montgomery County residence received a broken window caused by a stray bullet fired from a rifle. The projectile was recovered on scene lodged in between two plates of glass. No suspects at the time of the shooting but several shots were reported just before the window received damage.

2018

No relevant reports

2017

--- A 26 year old Talbot County deer hunter (firearms season) shot at two deer with 12 gauge shotgun slugs. The first deer was struck and ran 40 yards before collapsing, the second deer was shot at but the first slug went over its back, the second shot dropped the deer in the location where it was standing. Apparently the slug that missed struck an occupied residence just to one side of the front door. Upon a 911 call a sheriff's department deputy had searched and located the lone hunter. After an investigation by NRP the hunter was charged with negligent hunting and discharging a firearm within the safety zone. Property damage only

--- An unknown Carroll County deer hunter (firearms season) sent a 7mm projectile through the side of a residence, through the bedroom wall, through a wooden dresser, then through a closet wall before coming to rest in a pile of towels in the closet. Two people were in the bedroom at the time but neither was injured. A search of nearby farms was unsuccessful in locating any hunter(s). Property damage only

--- A 52 year old Cecil County deer hunter (late firearms season) took two shots at a deer with a 30/30 rifle toward the direction of a neighboring farm. One of the shots (both of which missed the deer) struck a dining room window of the adjacent residence and stopped, being found on the windowsill. During the investigation it was determined that the round that struck the window had ricocheted off of the ground. The distance from the shooter to the house was 398 yards.

(DNR's on-line annual report for 2017 is identical to DNR'S 2016's report – the 2016 appears to be missing)

2015

--- A 16 year old Allegany County turkey hunter fired two (2) shots from a 12 gauge shotgun at what they believed to be the white head of a spring gobbler. The shot traveled approximately 53 yards and struck a 70 year old camouflaged turkey hunter in the face. This hunter had walked into the woods, sat down and was listening for turkey's completely camouflaged except for the side of his face which is what the shooter was observing and mistook for a turkey. Non-Fatal

2014

--- A 50 year old Carroll County Fox Hunter sent a 6mm rifle round through a patio glass door. The round went through a vinyl garden hose and a plastic lawn chair before going through the door and striking a kitchen chair. The homeowner was the only occupant in the residence at the time and they were in bed sleeping.

--- A 52 year old Kent County Turkey Hunter (Spring Season) took two shots at a gobbler out in an open field. The second shot was at the bird while in flight. One pellet struck the storm door of an adjacent house causing the glass to shatter. The homeowner was present in the home at the time.

2013

--- A 47 year old Calvert County rabbit hunter received a gunshot (shotgun) wound to his body/thigh/head when he was shot by a 15 year old hunting partner. A party of 4 was hunting with the aid of a dog when a rabbit ran between the men who were approximately 40 yards apart. The shooter stated that he could not see the other hunter when he shot at the rabbit

--- A 52 year old Charles County deer hunter shot his 22 year old son with a rifle across an open field. The shooter and the victim had been hunting together and at dusk the shooter fired out at movement in the field which he mistook for a deer. was walking through the field prior to ending the hunt and returning to the vehicles.

--- A 28 year old Charles County deer hunter while hunting within the safety zone ---discharged his shotgun resulting in the rifled slug passing through a window of the residence striking a chandelier in the dining room and becoming embedded in a wall. Thankfully the residence was vacant at the time of the incident.

--- A rifle round was recovered from a Frederick County home during the second day of the extended fire arms deer season. The round went through the wall of the home and struck a sliding glass door causing it to shatter. The round was recovered at the scene by the sheriff's department. The nearest wooded area was over 400 yards away. Property Damage Only

--- A rifle round was recovered from a "second" Frederick County home during the extended firearms deer season. The round entered through the front wall of the residence blew out the drywall in the living room at which time the bullet came to rest on the floor and was recovered by the homeowner. The bullet was a full metal jacket round (illegal to use on big game)

2012

--- A 62 year old Harford County landowner was struck by a random shot on their property. Upon investigation it was determined the landowner had been hearing a volley of shots repeatedly behind her home. As she and her husband went outside to investigate, a piece of shot struck her in the left forearm. Law enforcement responded and never found hunters in the area. The landowners advised no one had permission to be there, therefore trespassers were suspected to be the shooters. No suspects were located nor arrests made. The victim suffered a very minor wound to her forearm. Non Fatal.

--- A home in Dorchester County was struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the homeowner heard shots and found a French door in the back of their home was shattered due a projectile striking the lower left hand pane. The area behind the home is a public hunting area. No suspects were ever located. It was also never determined hunters caused this situation.

2011

--- A 41 year old Carroll County woman was struck in the right leg by a stray projectile while she was in her back yard. Upon investigation it was determined two individuals were plinking and shooting at squirrels & birds with a .22 cal. rifle in a wooded area behind her residence. Due to an unsafe backstop, it was determined their projectile traveled approximately .26 miles to the victim's property causing the leg injury. Squirrel season was closed at the time of this incident. Charges pending. Non fatal.

--- A 57 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 57 year old hunting companion who he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter and victim had split up to hunt deer. Both hunters were wearing fluorescent orange when they departed each others company. The shooter had gone approximately 95 yards to his stand, climbed into it and began to hunt deer. The shooter observed a dark movement coming towards his location. The shooter was using a .30-06 scoped rifle. The shooter advised he determined he was shooting at a deer by looking through his scope, and shot at center mass.

--- A 48 year old Caroline County deer hunter shot his 46 year old hunting companion that he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter heard a disturbance of brush and saw movement, thinking it was a deer. The shooter fired a crossbow bolt at the movement at a distance of 62 yards, striking the victim in his left tibia. The time of the incident was four minutes after legal shooting hours. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting. Non Fatal.

--- A 16 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 19 year old hunting companion while shooting at a running deer: Upon investigation 8 hunters had organized a deer drive in a marshy dense wooded area. 5 hunters were pushing deer while 3 were standers. As a deer passed between two standers, the shooter shot at a running deer, striking his hunting companion in both femurs with a .12 ga. shotgun using #4 buckshot at a distance of 60 yards. The shooter advised he never saw the victim. Both hunters were wearing daylight fluorescent orange. Non Fatal.

--- A 56 year old Dorchester County turkey hunter shot his 36 year old hunting companion, mistaking him for game: Upon investigation it was determined the two hunters entered their hunting area and posted three turkey decoys in an open field. They then split up to hunt the area and the shooter advised he did not see which direction the victim went. After a period of time the shooter saw three turkeys to the right of the decoys

40 yards away. The shooter advised he could not see the birds at all times. After an hour he called his companion on a cell phone to ask him if he saw the birds. Immediately after their conversation, the shooter saw a movement then shot. He had shot his hunting companion. The movement he saw was the victim putting his cell phone away. The victim was shot at a distance of 38 yards. The victim received 24 #4 shotgun pellets which were fired from the shooters 12 .ga shotgun. The victim was struck in the right side of his body receiving wounds in his head, neck, shoulder, torso, calf, knee, and ankle. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting. Non Fatal.

--- A 13 year old Dorchester County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter discharged a .45 cal. muzzleloader at a deer 6 minutes after legal shooting hours. The projectile, missing the deer, traveled 242 yards striking a house 48 inches from the ground. As the projectile entered the house, it penetrated exterior and interior walls and lodged in a recliner. A resident in the home was sitting in the chair at the time and received a redmark on their shoulder where the projectile stopped on impact. Non Fatal

2010

--- During the 2010 Firearm Deer Season, residents of a home located in the area of Walkersville (Frederick County), reported their house had been struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the home had been struck by a projectile doing damage to the exterior & interior walls. Interviews were conducted with seven hunters who were in the vicinity of the area the day before hunting deer as regarding their actions that day. It was never determined who may have been the shooter, but one scenario did reveal a hunter had fired a .30.30 rifle at a deer pointed in the direction that the home approximately 3,940 feet away. No evidence was found to support charges. Non Fatal.

--- A 45 year old Frederick County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter had discharged a .12 gauge shotgun using slugs at a herd of deer. The gun jammed, the shooter cleared the gun, turned and shot at another deer in the direction of the home. The shooter advised he had become disoriented as to the direction he was shooting. The slug entered the home at a distance of 114 yards, traveled through the exterior and two interior walls, through two rooms, and into appliances and home furnishings. No one was in the home at the time of the incident. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting and Hunting within 150 yards of a dwelling (Safety Zone). Non Fatal.

--- A 53 year old Howard County deer hunter was shot by his 36 year old hunting companion. The shooter shot at a standing deer with a .12 gauge slug in an open field at approximately 243 yards. The bullet missed the deer, striking the victim sitting in a wooden ground blind at the opposite end of the field. The victim received injuries to his right arm and hand. Non Fatal. Charges pending an investigation

--- A 46 year old Queen Anne's County deer hunting was shot by his 25 year old hunting companion. With both subjects participating in a deer drive, the shooter shot at a running deer twice with a .20 gauge shotgun slug. A slug traveled 70 yards, striking the victim positioned at the opposite end of the field in the left leg. Non Fatal. Negligent Hunting charges pending.

--- A 55 year old Dorchester County rabbit hunter was shot by his 55 year old hunting companion. The shooter shot at a running rabbit with a .20 gauge shotgun in a thicket. The shot pellets traveled approximately 30 to 40 feet through the thicket striking the victim. The victim received injuries to the right side of his head, neck, eye, arm and left

--- A Frederick County garage window was struck by a bullet from an unknown source. An investigation could not recover the projectile nor related evidence. This incident occurred during the firearm's deer season.

2009

--- A 57 year-old goose hunter in Kent County was shot by another hunter while attempting to retrieve a wounded goose. The victim received a minor wound to the face from a shotgun pellet which deflected off the water striking the victim.

--- A window was broken at an occupied daycare facility from a slug fired by a shotgun in Howard County. Several hunters were found in the area and interviewed by several police agencies. Negligent hunting charges were filed, but the States Attorney elected not to prosecute due to insufficient evidence.

--- A window in a house was struck and broken by a sabot round fired by a deer hunter in Talbot County. The investigation found that in this case, the hunter was not negligent and charges were not filed.

--- While checking vacant buildings, several Frederick County Sheriff Deputy vehicles were struck by shot gun pellets causing minor damage. Several individuals who were hunting quail in the area were located and charges were filed by the States Attorney's office for Reckless Endangerment.

--- A 69 year-old deer hunter in Dorchester County found himself in the middle of a deer drive on a wildlife refuge. After hearing several shots the hunter realized that his shotgun had been struck on the barrel and magazine by lead shot. The shooter was never found or located.

2008

--- A 47 year-old Allegany County deer hunter, walking into the woods without hunter orange, was shot by a 32 year-old hunter. The shooter heard noise, saw movement through the trees and shot the victim without identifying the target. Fatal.

--- A 40 year-old Talbot County goose hunter was shot by his hunting partner when the shooter, from outside the blind, shot at a wounded goose. The victim in the blind was in the line of fire. One pellet entered his eye and lodged in his brain. Non-fatal.

--- A 64 year-old Garrett County deer hunter was shot in the abdomen by another hunter who mistook the victim for a deer. Shooter was charged with negligent hunting. Non-fatal.

2007

--- A 51 year-old Caroline County quail hunter shot his hunting partner when a quail flew between them. The victim received 4 pellets to his upper body.

--- A 54 year-old Talbot County deer hunter was shot by his hunting partner when a deer ran between them and the shooter shot at the deer. The shooter hit the deer and shrapnel from the slug hit the victim in the hand causing minor injuries.

--- A 59 year-old Queen Anne's County deer hunter was shot by his hunting partner when a deer ran between them. The victim was below field level, climbing a hill out of site of the shooter. He received neck injuries.

--- A 38 year-old Garrett County deer hunter was shot in the shoulder by his 16 year-old hunting partner when the victim was moving through bushes and mistaken for game. Victim was not wearing fluorescent orange.

--- A 64 year-old Charles County Turkey hunter was shot by his hunting partner when the victim started to retrieve a turkey and was mistaken for another turkey by the shooter. Victim received 4 pellet wounds to various parts of the body.

INCIDENTS -- NOT REPORTED IN DNR ACCIDENT REPORTS (2016 to present)– that were recorded in other news sources:

--- **MD: Woman attempting to shoot groundhog accidentally hits man fishing at park**

May 28, 2019

The Maryland Natural Resource Police are investigating an incident of a bullet that grazed a man in the shoulder on Sunday afternoon.

According to police, a 61-year-old woman was shooting a groundhog in her backyard, which borders the Smithsburg Lions Community Park.

The woman missed and the bullet ricocheted across the water and struck a 28-year-old man who was fishing.

Officials said there doesn't seem to be any issues with limitation, however the shooter is responsible for anything in background, like in this case, the park....

--- **Fatality** : Maryland Natural Resources police were investigating a fatal hunting accident in Frederick County on Saturday, the opening day of deer season for firearms.

Police said the rifle of a first-time hunter from Altadena, Calif., was accidentally discharged while he was deer hunting on private property on Eylers Valley Flint Road near Thurmont. Police identified the victim as Vincent Cavallo, 32.

Cavallo and his uncle were hunting in separate areas of the property when the uncle heard a gunshot. He went to check on his nephew and found him dead, DNR police spokeswoman Candy Thomson said. Police were called to the scene at 9:24 a.m.

Police said the victim is believed to have slipped or dropped the gun and it discharged, hitting him in the head. His body was taken to the medical examiner's office. Natural Resources police were assisted by the Frederick County Sheriff's Department in the investigation.

lorraine.mirabella@baltsun.com

--- Author: Scott Broom

Published: 6:07 PM EDT October 24, 2016

The mystery is still not solved after an 87-year old man was apparently struck (ed. note: in the head) by a shotgun pellet or bullet fragment while walking on his property in rural Montgomery County Saturday. Authorities suspect a hunting accident, but they don't know who fired the shot or from where. Residents and hunters say they are deeply concerned by the incident. The victim's property is on the boundary of the Patuxent River State Park where hunting with firearms is permitted. Hunters may not fire guns within 150 yards of an occupied dwelling without a residents' permission, even if the hunter is on another property or

public land nearby. Maryland averages 2-3 hunting accidents involving firearms annually. The victim is almost always a hunter.

NOTE: see more of this episode at:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/man-87-in-marylands-montgomery-county-struck-by-a-small-metallic-projectile/2016/10/22/bc0e5974-98c8-11e6-bc79-af1cd3d2984b_story.html

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.wusa9.com/amp/article/news/local/mystery-surrounds-shooting-of-elderly-md-man-walking-home/65-340868641>

--- Fatality: Oct 11, 2015 - WASHINGTON — A 75-year-old huntsman was fatally *shot during* a hunting trip Saturday *in* Queen Anne's County, ... *Marvin Bowen Coppage*, a resident of *Henderson*, was hired to lead a guided *pheasant and chukar* hunt.

--- 2014 A mountain biker was peppered by bird shot while riding his bike in the Tuckahoe State Park on Maryland's Eastern (related by Tuckahoe park staff) knowledge)

Citizen report:

Date: March 15, 2019 at 9:15:38 AM EDT

To: <mwc.dnr@maryland.gov>, <animalcontrol@howardcountymd.gov>, <hcpdcrimetips@howardcountymd.gov>

Subject: Hunting Violation in Western Howard County

Hello,

I want to report a hunting violation that I encountered yesterday afternoon between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the Woodbine parcel of the Patuxent State Park.

I was in the park on horseback and one or two people began shooting firearms near the trail head that is immediately north of the farm at 4505 Jennings Chapel Road.

I hollered several times so that they could hear that I was there and stop shooting long enough for me to get out of the park. They were shooting between me and the closest way out of the park so my way was totally blocked.

They did not stop shooting even as I hollered and eventually my very sane and experienced horse bolted to try to get away from the noise, which was echoing everywhere.

Luckily I am a strong rider and I did not have a mishap but my horse was badly frightened, as was I, frankly. It was mainly luck that we did not run into a tree or barbed wire or worse.

Once I finally got to the trail head – after picking my way along as close to the edge of the park as I possibly could on the theory they would not fire towards residences – I saw their vehicles and got their license plates. They were both Maryland vehicles, one was 5CC8856 and the other was 5C74853.

I have attached photographs of the vehicles. I also have a photograph of my riding attire yesterday, which included a safety orange saddle pad and a reflective yellow jacket, which I can provide if necessary.

I have been riding in this part of the park for over 15 years and every time I have encountered hunters we have been courteous to one another and respectful of each other's sport and mindful of each other's safety. These people were obviously an exception.

I am happy to discuss further by telephone if necessary.

Testimony - Sunday hunting - 1030 rollback Dorches

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: UNF



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

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

In the Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee, February 27, 2024

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 847

Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions - UNFAVORABLE

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 represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

❖ **A majority of Marylanders oppose Sunday hunting.** An independent statewide poll conducted by **Gonzales Research and Media Services** in 2018 found that **68.9% of respondents oppose Sunday hunting**. Even DNR's own 2018 commissioned survey found that a majority of the general population does not favor Sunday hunting and does not want to see it expanded.¹

❖ **This bill would allow all day Sunday hunting in Dorchester County for many months of the year.**

❖ **This bill upends a compromise solution that many hoped would bring this issue, which has consumed much of this Committee's time for many years, to a final closure that gave everyone a little bit of what they wanted.** It seeks to strip recreational users of their only right to quiet and safe enjoyment of the outdoors on one - partial - day of the week.

❖ This bill would infringe on the rights of the general public to enjoy outdoor recreation, the importance of which has received increased attention since the Pandemic. **78% of the Gonzales poll respondents said they would decide to alter their recreational plans to avoid hunters. In a Maryland Horse Council 2016 poll, 85% of respondents said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters.** The majority of Maryland's equestrians do at least some trail riding.

¹ https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2018_DeerPublicOpinionSurvey.pdf

❖ **Since the advent of the pandemic, widespread use of outdoor recreation and natural resources by the general public has increased.** For example, attendance at Maryland State Parks in 2020 increased 45% over 2019, which was also a record year.² Demand has remained strong. **Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, including the distinctions between public and private lands. Now is not the time to increase general public exposure to possible hunting risks or to further deter the public from outdoor recreation. We have separately submitted with this testimony a report of hunting incidents involving third parties, from 2007 to the latest available data, compiled from DNR's own data.**

❖ **The Maryland horse industry represents \$2.9 billion in economic impact and supports 28,000 jobs. There are over 94,000 horses in Maryland (more per square mile than any state in the Union). There are over 700,000 horse enthusiasts.³ There are horses in every county in the state and in Baltimore City. The majority of Maryland riders do trail riding.⁴**

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes breed, interest and discipline associations, plus horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses and race tracks, to the owners of international level competition horses, local sport horses, trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. The owner of Pimlico, Laurel and Rosecroft racetracks is a member, as are vets, tack stores, and other farms, businesses and enthusiasts throughout the state. Every Maryland county, without exception, is home to hundreds to thousands of horses. There are more horses per square mile in Maryland than in any state in the Union.

The horse industry in Maryland is a large, engaged and thriving constituency, and a strong economic engine: 28,000 direct equine related jobs, supporting over \$1 billion in wages. The industry represents \$2.9 billion in annual economic impact. Thus, legislative actions that affect the equine industry have a broad economic effect.

POSITION

The Horse Council opposes SB 847

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BACKGROUND

For over 20 years, the Maryland Horse Council has worked to ensure fair use of shared natural resources during hunting season, by seeking to preserve Sundays as the one day of the week

² <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2021/02/04/lt-governor-boyd-k-rutherford-maryland-department-of-natural-resources-announce-45-percent-increase-in-maryland-state-parks-attendance-in-2020/>

³2023 Economic Impact Study of the Maryland Horse Industry, The American Horse Council Foundation.

⁴<http://equiery.com/trail-riding-tops-reader-survey/>

when children and adults who are hikers, birdwatchers, dog walkers, trail riders and other outdoor enthusiasts could enjoy the outdoors without concern for adverse interactions with hunters. Almost 20 years ago, we helped defeat a number of statewide Sunday hunting bills.

Proponents of Sunday hunting then changed tactics, seeking to introduce Sunday hunting on a county-by-county basis, which we also opposed vigorously. Sometimes they were successful; sometimes not. When they were successful, they succeeded in making an already complicated situation more complicated, making it more difficult for others to plan their outings, and for Natural Resources Police to effectively crack down on poachers and irresponsible hunters, which has caused even more negative encounters between irresponsible hunters and other users.⁵

Beginning in 2016, MHC proposed reasonable compromises that would still allow fair use of shared natural resources, by cutting off Sunday hunting, where allowed, at 10:30 am. This compromise still gives hunters, trail riders and others plenty of Sunday access to opportunities. This compromise was embraced by some legislators, who have praised the Horse Council for this reasonable approach. In recent years, this compromise has been amended into the statute for Calvert, Charles, Caroline, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot County and Wicomico Counties. With these amendments, the Committee sent a strong signal that this issue should be put to bed, with a compromise that gave everyone a little bit of what they wanted.

This bill attempts to roll back that compromise in Dorchester County, and to strip recreational users of their only right to quiet and safe enjoyment of the outdoors on one - partial - day of the week. The bill would allow all day Sunday hunting for all species in Dorchester County. This effectively is nearly year-round. This bill does nothing to improve the situation for Natural Resources Police and continues to infringe on the rights of other users of our shared natural resources in Maryland.

The issue of recreational Sunday hunting is certainly a fraught one. In a November 2018 independent Gonzales statewide poll, the vast majority of respondents opposed Sunday hunting:

SUNDAY HUNTING Oppose 68.9%; Favor 21.9%

Breakdown:

Strongly Favor 13.5%

Somewhat Favor 8.4%

Somewhat Oppose 15.4%

Strongly Oppose 53.5%

These majorities opposed to Sunday hunting are true in Baltimore Metro, Washington Metro AND Rural areas. Rural Maryland opposed Sunday hunting 60.5% vs 34.1% in favor. Even DNR's own commissioned survey found that a majority of the general population does not favor

⁵ In a 2016 Maryland Horse Council survey, 35% of respondents reported "adverse incidents" with hunters while trail riding, ranging from rudeness to deliberate attempts to spook horses, threatening with firearms, and firing of "warning" shots. Significant percentages of DNR's survey respondents also reported problems when encountering hunters.

Sunday hunting and does not want to see it expanded. (See footnote 1.) This bill directly contravenes that clear public opinion.

It is important to make clear that MHC is not opposed to hunting. Many of our members are hunters of deer, other game mammals and game birds. We just want to ensure that everyone has a safe option for enjoyment of the outdoors. The COVID pandemic has dramatically increased the level of outdoor activity and use of natural resources. According to DNR, 2020 State Park attendance increased by 45% to 21.5 million visitors. Demand has remained strong. In 2021, Lt. Governor Rutherford stated: "With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic changing the way we live, work, and play, more and more Marylanders are finding affordable, socially-distant, and family-friendly recreation opportunities at our parks and public lands," (See footnote 2.) Many of these new users are unfamiliar with the rules of hunting and hunting seasons, and are unaware that they may encounter hunters in the woods. Now is not the time to roll the dice and increase the chances of potential adverse interactions between hunters and members of the public who are relatively new to the outdoors..

It is also sometimes argued that recreational hunters need Sundays because they have other things to do on Saturdays - a situation that plainly applies to most of Maryland's families who use outdoor resources, be they hunters, birdwatchers, dog walkers, mountain bikers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and trail riders. So why should one group get special consideration? Where is the balancing of the public good, the equitable access? The number of licensed resident hunters in Maryland, about 100,000, is less than 2% of the state's population of about 6 million. Compare that with the 24% who reported (pre-pandemic) making frequent or occasional trips specifically to view and experience wildlife in their native habitat for photography or other non- hunting purposes. (See footnote 1.)

In MHC's statewide survey on Sunday hunting, 68% of respondents ride on trails on public or private land one or more days a week. And, perhaps most significantly, 85% said they changed their schedules or riding locations to avoid encountering hunters.

We of course recognize that private land owners have some right to decide what uses they want to allow on their land. But such rights have never been absolute, as any review of zoning and land use rules can plainly establish. And, as a practical matter the public/private land distinction affords little relief since public and private tracts are often relatively small, non-contiguous, intertwined and rarely well-marked. In our survey, referenced above, 56% of respondents said they ride on trails that cross both public and private land.

CONCLUSION

We urge the Committee to give SB 847 an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,
THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773) info@mdhorsecouncil.org

testimony_SB_0847.pdf

Uploaded by: Joyce Bell

Position: UNF

SB 0847 Repealing 10:30 time restriction in Dorchester County

Joyce and Wayne Bell, Talbot County, MD

Position: **OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Feldman and Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment:

By passing this bill you will infringe on the ability of the non-hunting residents in Dorchester County to enjoy the outdoors – and that’s a big number since only 2.5% of Marylanders are hunters. On the other hand, 83% of the population in Maryland are “wildlife watchers” according to the 2016 US Fish and Wildlife census report, which also states that wildlife watchers spend 3 times more money than hunters.

My husband is an avid birdwatcher and a member of one the 15 local chapters of the MD Ornithological Society. Weekly bird walks are scheduled for most every Sunday. Scouts, dogwalkers, trail riders-- all look forward to Sundays for outings to avoid confrontations with hunters who might be in the woods on the other 6 days of the week.

Doctors in 34 states are praising the health benefits of getting outside in nature – handing out “green prescriptions”. Hunting discourages outdoor activities at a time when we need them the most.

I am a member of Tuckahoe Equestrian Center, a trail riding non-profit, which borders Caroline and Queen Anne’s Counties and has a current membership of 414 individuals. We especially like to ride in the fall when it is cool and bugs are no longer an issue. Just as my home is surrounded on 3 sides by hunted property, so is Tuckahoe State Park. It is unnerving and can be dangerous to ride close to areas where hunting might be going on. Many of my horse friends have recounted incidents with hunters, so we often just stay out of the woods. In 2014 a biker was shot in Tuckahoe State Park. In 2016 an 87 year old man was struck in the head by a bullet while walking in his own backyard which adjoined Patuxant River Park. In 2019 a woman was shooting a groundhog in her back yard and grazed a man’s shoulder – he was walking in a park which bordered her land. None of these incidents were reported by DNR, but were reported in newspapers or on TV (please see attached).

Many horse owners do not have horse trailers and must rely on a network of private trails that traverse their farms to ride. However, whether on private land or in a park, Sunday is the only day we can be sure that there isn’t a hunter hiding in a tree stand out of sight.

Since a statewide poll in 2018 showed that 68.9% of all Marylanders opposed Sunday hunting while only 21.9% favor it, **it is clear that this bill should be defeated.**

Author: Scott Broom

Published: 6:07 PM EDT October 24, 2016

Updated: 7:18 PM EDT October 24, 2016

The mystery is still not solved after an 87-year old man was apparently struck (ed. note: in the head) by a shotgun pellet or bullet fragment while walking on his property in rural Montgomery County Saturday.

Authorities suspect a hunting accident, but they don't know who fired the shot or from where.

Residents and hunters say they are deeply concerned by the incident.

The victim's property is on the boundary of the Patuxent River State Park where hunting with firearms is permitted.

Hunters may not fire guns within 150 yards of an occupied dwelling without a residents' permission, even if the hunter is on another property or public land nearby.

Maryland averages 2-3 hunting accidents involving firearms annually. The victim is almost always a hunter. The last bystander to be injured was a mountain biker who was peppered by bird shot while riding in the Tuckahoe State Park on Maryland's Eastern Shore in 2014.

Currently in Maryland, hunters may venture afield with shotguns to pursue small game or hunt deer using muzzle-loading rifles, which are frequently modern versions of antique weapons.

The season for hunting deer with modern firearms begins November 26 and goes through December 10. Hunters may only use shotguns in the county, which have a dramatically limited range compared to rifles.

The majority of Montgomery County is off-limits to firearms hunting with the exception of the outermost rural areas.

NOTE: see more of this episode at:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.wusa9.com/amp/article/news/local/mystery-surrounds-shooting-of-elderly-md-man-walking-home/65-340868641>