



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 16, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 497

SHORT TITLE: Hunting – Nonresident Sika Deer Stamp – Fee Alteration

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports House Bill 497 because it will increase hunting license revenue for the Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage Service. Revenue generated from the sale of hunting licenses and associated stamps is vital for the department to fulfill its mission of managing wildlife for the Maryland public. The increased revenue generated from HB 497 is also eligible for matching federal funds from the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act which provides \$3.00 of federal funds for every \$1.00 of hunting license/stamp sales. The department also supports HB 497 because it adjusts the price for the sika deer hunting stamp to be more comparable to what other states charge non-resident hunters for unique hunting opportunities similar to Maryland’s sika deer.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The sika deer hunting stamp was created in 2023 and is required for hunting sika deer in Maryland. Resident hunters are charged \$10.00 for the stamp while non-resident hunters are charged \$25.00. For each stamp sold, the department is also eligible to receive \$30.00 in matching federal funds for resident stamps and \$75.00 for non-resident stamps. Approximately 3,200 non-resident stamps were sold during the 2023-2024 hunting season. While it is difficult to determine exactly how much revenue will be generated by the stamp price increase, it is projected the change could result in up to \$300,000 in additional special and federal funds for the agency.

There is no other place in North America to hunt wild sika deer. As a result, it is not possible to compare stamp prices directly with other jurisdictions. However, non-resident prices for hunting other limited-opportunity species in other states can easily cost several hundred to several thousand dollars. Hunters currently travel from across North America to pursue sika deer in the marshes on the Eastern Shore.

BILL EXPLANATION

HB 497 raises the price of a non-resident sika deer hunting stamp from \$25.00 to \$100.00.