



February 12, 2024

Environment and Transportation Committee
ATTN: Chair Marc Korman
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for House Bill 778

Dear Chair Korman and Honorable Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of Safari Club International (SCI), I write in support of House Bill 778 and expanding Sunday hunting opportunities for migratory game birds in Maryland. SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide. Our organization, along with active members who live and hunt in Maryland, strongly support removing hunting prohibitions on Sunday hunting for migratory birds that would result in increased access for sportsmen and women and increased conservation funding for Maryland's natural resources.

Adding the ability to pursue migratory game birds on Sunday will significantly increase access and opportunities for recruiting and retaining new hunters. Hunters often cite "lack of time" as one of the number one reasons they stop hunting. Expanding Sunday hunting is key to providing more people, especially youth and beginners, with more opportunities to engage in hunting, which ultimately leads to generating more hunters, and associated revenue, in the years to come. Further, studies have shown that the additional access does not negatively impact user experience, non-consumptive users, or game populations.

Unfortunately, as you fully understand, many hunters today are still prevented from going afield on their own and/or from introducing new or novice hunters to the great outdoors because they are competing against work, organized sports, and other activities on Saturdays, which is currently their only opportunity to hunt outside of the typical work and school week. This stance ignores the facts that the majority of Maryland hunters support removing Sunday waterfowl hunting restrictions, that hunting is a deep part of Maryland's heritage, and the state's sportsmen and women direct contribution the state's economy. Recent reports show that Maryland hunters contribute \$328 million to the economy while directly supporting over 4100 jobs and providing over \$29 million to state and local taxes.

Maintaining America's large number of hunters is crucial to maintaining the revenues necessary to sustain abundant wildlife and wildlife habitat – for both game and non-game – conservation programs as well as access related programs. Funds generated through the sale of hunting licenses, tags, and permits all go to the benefit of Maryland's natural resources.



We respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 778. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important measure.

Sincerely,

W. Laird Hamberlin, CEO – Safari Club International/Foundation

CC: Secretary Josh Kurtz
Delegate Kevin B. Hornberger
Director Paul Peditto
Eric Luedtke