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TESTIMONY ON SB0272 – POSITION : FAVORABLE

SB0272: Prince Georges County – Natural Resources – Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safe Zones

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Luke Anthony Muldoon

Please excuse my informal introduction, I'm Luke Muldoon. I grew up in Bowie and went to high school in Hyattsville at DeMatha Catholic and then completed my bachelor's degree in College Park at the University of Maryland. As an officer in the Air Force, my last duty stations was at Andrews Air Force Base. My work office is in Westphalia and I spend the majority of my time in Prince Georges County. I am also an avid outdoorsman. My family's favorite past time and most treasured tradition is hunting and we've been doing that safely within Prince Georges county for 4 generations. Of course, the county is changing and that requires us to change as well. You can argue that no system understands change quite so well as our courts system.

I also understand the need for change, and that's why I'm here today. We live in a world of hustle and bustle, and watching the farm lands of Largo and Landover turn into sports stadiums and shopping centers has been a part of Prince Georges county change.

The natural environment for wildlife has changed and deer have adapted to living in close quarters, overpopulating certain areas where hunting is restricted by a 150 yard safety bubble around inhabited structures. It is here that vehicular collisions are much more frequent and residential landscapes are destroyed as deer adapt to the urban environment. These are the areas where hunting within 50 yards, as several other counties in Maryland have already proved, will be an effective means of controlling the deer herd and providing opportunity for hunters who are granted permission to hunt by landowners.

But, be assured, technology in the hunting industry has also changed. Archery hunters using compound bows such as myself can regularly hit a quarter sized dot at 35 yards from an elevated position and most archery hunters, myself included, restrict shots to less than 25 yards. Elevated positions assure that the arrow is in line with the ground on impact. New age Crossbows, equipped with safety switches to prevent an arrow being shot even as the trigger is pulled, are accurate to almost 100 yards. However, still to abide by ethics and safety, hunters typically restrict themselves to shots under 25 yards.

Many people, like myself and you here today, spend the week stuck on the beltway or hard at work. We all live for our weekends and this is particularly true as hunters. However, in Prince George's county, hunters who spend all week at work, and might have to devote Saturday to family orders or getting their

lives in order for the following week, miss out on the opportunity to spend time outdoors. Let's remember that now, many people work on Saturday as well since making ends meet might frequently requires a six day work week. Time is of the essence, it's the only thing we can't get back, and when the only time to go spend time hunting falls on a Sunday, many wishing to spend time outdoors are simply out of luck. Hunters use this tradition as therapy. They are legally prohibited from going hunting on the only day that they can. Again, many other Maryland counties have set this precedent that hunting on Sunday's is an effective wildlife management tool and it is a right that individuals deserve.

Moving on to some of the implications of the restrictions that have been in place in Prince George's county, we can agree that the existing restrictions greatly reduce opportunity for hunters in Prince George's county. We are all familiar with the fact that if more deer are around, there will be more vehicular collisions. I greatly appreciate your support of SB0272 to allow private landowners to make the decision of how they choose to wish to use their own, private property.