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Budget & Taxation Committee



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Senate Bill 335 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 335, which would require the bag limit for all Canada geese to be uniform across the State outside of Western Maryland during the migratory Atlantic Population Canada goose hunting season.

Currently, there is an inconsistency between where Maryland and Virginia choose to protect the Atlantic Population (AP) of Canada Geese. Virginia's boundary begins significantly further west than our boundary in Maryland does. I have attached to this letter a map that shows the combined Atlantic Population zones of each state, which I believe demonstrates the problems with these inconsistent lines. These different boundaries create a gap in our protection of these geese. The intent of this bill is to protect the migratory geese that enter this narrow corridor where lower bag limits would otherwise apply on both sides.

This bill is cross-filed with House Bill 892, which you heard earlier this session. To better align this bill with this intent, this bill was amended in the Senate to exempt the Western Maryland counties that are currently in the resident zone – Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties, as well as the portion of Carroll County that is west of Routes 97 and 31 – from this bill. I believe that, even with this region exempted, the bill still accomplishes its goal of expanding protection of AP geese while being consistent with the boundaries of not only Virginia, but also Pennsylvania, where the boundary through Carroll County continues along Route 97 as it crosses the state line.

Senate Bill 335 would not change DNR's ability to move the line between the AP hunting zone and the resident hunting zone in any way. However, the decision to move that boundary would have implications on goose hunting in these areas outside of the AP season, which is currently set at 30 days. This bill would only apply during the AP season and would leave these areas unaffected for the rest of the year. For that reason, I believe that this bill provides a more logical area of protection for AP geese while still allowing as many goose hunting opportunities as possible for Marylanders.

This bill as amended also includes a five-year sunset on the bill to ensure that this issue will be revisited based on the data the State receives during that period. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 335. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey", written over a horizontal line.

Senator Jack Bailey