

February 19, 2025

BILL NUMBER: **House Bill 766 - First Reader**

SHORT TITLE: **WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION – MEMBERSHIP - ALTERATIONS**

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: **OPPOSED**

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department of Natural Resources respectfully opposes House Bill 766 because it removes authority from the Governor to freely select the individual that represents the farming community on the Wildlife Advisory Commission. Losing this authority could jeopardize the mission of this advisory board, which is to promote the future of hunting and the preservation of wildlife in the State. The Governor, with advice from the Secretary, has free will to select all other designated candidates, within the guidelines provided below, of this 10-member commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wildlife Advisory Commission is comprised of 10 individuals appointed by the Governor and provides oversight to the Wildlife and Heritage Service. Presently, it is required that there be representation from:

- Academia - a researcher with expertise in wildlife biology, wildlife conservation, wildlife management, or ecology;
- The farming community;
- The hunting community;
- The wildlife preservation community; and
- The passive wildlife recreation community.

There is an online application process and it is at the Governor’s discretion, with the Secretary’s advice, to appoint individuals to the commission.

BILL EXPLANATION

HB 766 requires the Governor to use a list of individuals selected by the Maryland Farm Bureau when filling the Wildlife Advisory Commission seat that represents the farming community.