



Maryland Grain Producers Association
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House Bill 483 - Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation

Committee: Way & Means

MGPA Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA supports House Bill 483 which would repeal the \$300 cap on the income tax credit an individual can claim for venison donation in conjunction with a deer management permit.

Previous estimated from the National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates that farmers experience over \$10 million in crop damage annually with 75% of that being attributed to deer. MGPA members experience would say that number is likely much higher. Maryland's deer population was estimated to be just over 200,000 white-tailed deer and 10,000 sika deer in 2022. The density of deer to suitable habitat in Maryland is high and therefore causes conflict with not only farmers and their crops but also vehicles and homeowners. Responsible hunting is the best way to control deer over-population.

Farmers cite an outlet for the harvest deer as the number one impediment to effectively controlling crop damage. Each family usually only needs one or two deer a year and then looks to give the rest away to family or friends. Previously, up to \$125,000 was allocated from the state's budget to Farmers and Hunters Feeding the hungry which allowed farmers and hunters to donate deer for processing that were then donated to the Maryland Food Bank or other food pantries. At its peak, FHFH was processing and donating 4,500 deer a year providing 720,000 meals of high-quality protein to Marylanders in need. Since the state funding was discontinued, FHFH are processing about 1,100 due to limited funding.

This bill would allow farmers to harvest and donate more deer to feed Maryland families in need by more accurately reflecting the cost of processing at \$75 per deer and removing the cap on the tax credit.

MGPA respectfully requests your favorable report on House Bill 483.