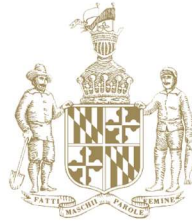


NATALIE ZIEGLER
Legislative District 9A
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 175
Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation - Alterations**

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and honorable members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present House Bill 175 - Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation - Alterations. This bill increases the maximum tax credit an individual may claim for donating venison to food banks or other charitable organizations from \$300 to \$600.

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, farmers across Maryland have faced \$10 million in economic losses due to wildlife damage, 77% of which are caused by deer. In addition to agricultural impact, the Department of Natural Resources reported that in 2021, 30,000-35,000 collisions were caused by deer. Unchecked deer populations eat and damage forest understories, hindering reforestation efforts and our state's goal to plant 5 million trees by 2031. Deer control is also critical in the mitigation of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses.

The harvest of antlerless deer is a cornerstone of Maryland's deer management program, relying on the participation of civilian hunters. Currently, Maryland hunters can claim \$75 per donated deer, with a maximum tax credit of \$300 for any taxable year. The \$75 tax credit helps to pay most, but not all, of the cost to process a deer for donation. An average deer can yield 40-50 pounds of venison. This has been a successful program, incentivizing hunters to contribute to food banks while also controlling the states' deer populations. As food banks have recently seen an increase in demand, these contributions are even more important. By doubling the \$300 limit to \$600, we can increase the effectiveness of this program, supplying our state's food banks with venison and mitigating the economic losses caused by deer overpopulation.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 175.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natalie Ziegler".

Delegate Natalie Ziegler
Howard & Montgomery Counties, District 9A