



BRANDON M. SCOTT  
MAYOR

*Office of Government  
Relations 88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**SB0643**

March 10, 2026

**TO:** Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
**RE:** Senate Bill 643- Natural Resources –Hunting - Management

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 643.

SB 643 updates Maryland law relating to wildlife management by expanding the authority of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to address deer population impacts and by modernizing Sunday hunting regulations across the State. The legislation authorizes DNR to reduce deer populations on single, contiguous properties of at least 10 acres where documented deer damage exists. Deer damage is defined to include widespread ecological impacts such as the elimination of forest understory, tree regeneration, and native plants, as well as destruction of agricultural crops and ornamental landscaping. The bill permits DNR, at its discretion, to determine appropriate methods of population reduction and to issue permits to property owners or their employees, lessees, or agents, to shoot deer on Sundays as part of an authorized management effort. During deer firearms season, permits must prohibit Sunday deer hunting within 25 yards of a DNR designated equestrian trail. The bill also repeals certain county-by-county Sunday hunting restrictions, authorizes DNR to adopt regulations allowing Sunday hunting during game bird and game mammal seasons, and repeals the prohibition on Sunday hunting of migratory game birds, subject to applicable federal and state requirements. Additionally, DNR is required to map eligible areas for deer damage permits and make those maps publicly available.

Within Baltimore City, hunting is not permitted on public lands under any circumstances This includes all parks and properties managed by Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP). However, hunting is legal within Baltimore City if individuals maintain the 450-foot safety zone as regulated by the State, hunt only on property they own or have permission to hunt on,

and possess a valid Maryland state deer hunting license.

Many state wildlife agencies have been removing Sunday hunting bans that were initially established to enforce Sabbath observance and incentivize church attendance. Allowing Sunday hunting will provide hunters with additional opportunities to harvest their desired game animal, particularly for individuals whose work or family schedules prevent them from hunting during the week.

For these reasons, the Baltimore City Administration **supports** Senate Bill 643 while reaffirming that hunting remains strictly prohibited on public lands within Baltimore City and subject to all applicable state and local safety and licensing requirements.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785  
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136  
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov>*

