

I strongly support SB0545.pdf

Uploaded by: James Werner

Position: FAV

James Werner
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Feb 17, 2026

Testimony in support of SB0545
To: Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee

My name is Jim Werner and I live in Frederick County. I'm writing to express my support for SB0545. During the recent hunting season, We were sued by PSEG to gain access to our property during deer hunting season. We were told that we needed the permission of PSEG to Hunt on our own property! This is totally unacceptable. This is our property and no judge or outside entity should be able to tell us when we can hunt on our property. This must be stopped and this bill will do that.

I strongly support SB0545, and respectfully urge you to support and pass this bill. No Marylander should have to ask permission from a power company to use their own property for whatever lawful reason they want.

Thank you for considering this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jim Werner
Mt. Airy, MD

SB545SurveyDeerHunting.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Ready

Position: FAV

JUSTIN READY
Legislative District 5
Carroll County

MINORITY WHIP
Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 19, 2026

Senator Justin Ready
SB 545 – Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors – Private Property Access -
Prohibition

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education Energy and the Environment Committee,

Senate Bill 545 prohibits land surveyors or property line surveyors from conducting a survey on private property during deer firearms hunting season without the written permission of the property owner. Deer firearms hunting season is defined in Section 10-415 of the Natural Resources Article, which the Department sets by regulation.

Under current law, land surveyors working on behalf of the State may enter any private land to conduct surveys, run lines or levels, or obtain information relating to the acquisition or future public use of the property for any governmental report, undertaking or improvement.

Unfortunately, property owners, particularly in the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project corridor largely have not been given enough notice, often having notices coming right before in the mail. This is also especially a challenge for those planning day-long hunting trips, or for those hunters utilizing land agreements who may not be in daily communication with the landowner.

SB 545 simply states that surveyors must get written permission to enter private land during deer firearms hunting season. I respectfully request a favorable on SB 545.

26 MGPA_SB545_Surveyors.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsay Thompson

Position: FAV



Maryland Grain Producers Association
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www.marylandgrain.com

Date: February 19, 2026

Senate Bill 545 - Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors - Private Property Access – Prohibition

Committee: Education, Energy and Environment Committee

MGPA Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) respectfully submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 545 which would prohibit a land surveyor or property line surveyor from entering private property during deer firearms hunting season without the written permission of the property owner.

For many Maryland grain farmers, the firearms deer season is not only an important wildlife management period but also a time when hunter lease their farms for hunting. Unexpected entry onto actively hunted agricultural property creates real and immediate safety risks and conflicts with hunters who may have their hunts interrupted with unexpected, third-party entrants.

Senate Bill 545 provides a reasonable, common-sense safeguard by ensuring that property owners retain control over access during a limited and clearly defined period when firearms are in use. Written permission simply formalizes communication and awareness, helping avoid accidents while preserving the ability of surveyors to perform their work at appropriate times.

Importantly, Senate Bill 545 does not prevent surveys from occurring; it only requires written permission during firearms deer season. This balanced approach allows necessary boundary and property work to continue while prioritizing safety and communication with landowners. This bill affirms the fundamental principle that landowners should be informed and give consent before others access their property during this high-risk period.

For Maryland's grain farmers, many of whom steward thousands of acres across multiple parcels, this clarity is both practical and necessary. Advance notice and permission ensure that survey work can be scheduled safely outside active hunting times or coordinated appropriately with the landowner.

Conclusion

Senate Bill 545 is a narrowly tailored bill that enhances safety, respects private property rights, and promotes better coordination between survey professionals and landowners. For these reasons, the Maryland Grain Producers Association urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 545.

Thank you,

Lindsay Thompson

Executive Director

SB 545 - Criminal and Civil Trespass Professional

Uploaded by: Christa McGee

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 545 - Criminal and Civil Trespass Professional Land Surveyors

Position: Support with Amendment

Maryland REALTORS® appreciates the goal of Senate Bill 545 to improve safety during the period when deer hunting with firearms is permitted. However, we recommend changes to protect surveyor safety without unnecessarily delaying time sensitive real estate transactions.

As introduced, Senate Bill 545 prohibits a professional land surveyor or property line surveyor from conducting a survey on private property during the period when deer hunting with firearms is permitted unless the property owner has given express permission.

Often, surveyors sometimes must briefly access areas outside the boundaries of the property being surveyed in order to locate markers, confirm boundary lines, or complete required measurements. That would be thwarted under this legislation as introduced, which impacts real estate sales. When surveys are delayed, closings and other time sensitive steps in the transaction can be delayed as well.

Maryland REALTORS® recommends amending the bill to use a notice-based approach during hunting season rather than effectively shutting down survey work. During hunting season, a surveyor should be permitted to conduct necessary field work if the surveyor provides advance notice to surrounding property owners in the vicinity that surveying work will occur in that area on the specified date or dates. This balances surveyor safety with the ability to do their jobs. In addition, it promotes awareness and coordination during hunting activity.

With this amendment, Maryland REALTORS® respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 545.

**For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or
christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**

MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 545.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: UNF

February 17th, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 545 Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors – Private Property Access – Prohibition

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 545 Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors – Private Property Access – Prohibition**.

While MBIA understands the intent of SB 545 is to address landowner concerns regarding property access, the legislation as written creates disproportionate barriers to essential professional services. By placing a broad restriction on licensed surveyors, the bill effectively imposes a statewide moratorium on routine surveying that will severely damage the real estate and construction industries and prevent surveyors from serving individual homeowners who rely on timely boundary surveys, location surveys, and property line determinations for refinances, fence installations, additions, and other everyday property needs.

The bill prohibits entering private property without written permission during deer firearms season. While most survey work is commissioned by a specific client, accurate boundary surveys require surveyors to locate evidence on adjoining properties. To certify a property line for a homeowner, surveyors are legally and professionally mandated to find monuments that often sit on a neighbor's land. If a neighbor, who may be an absentee landlord, an LLC, or involved in a boundary dispute, refuses to sign a permission slip, the survey cannot be completed.

A blackout period that disrupts real estate closings during the deer firearms hunting season creates a significant window of time—typically two weeks in late November/December and additional days in January—during which surveyors would be effectively banned from working on many properties. This coincides with the busiest time for year-end real estate settlements. If a surveyor cannot enter an adjoining property to verify a corner, the survey stops. If the survey stops, the mortgage company will not fund the loan. As a result, families attempting to close on homes will face delays, lost interest rate locks, and breach of contract—all because a surveyor could not obtain a signature from a neighbor.

Under this bill, a licensed surveyor could be charged with a misdemeanor, face up to 6 months in jail, and be subject to a \$5,000 civil penalty. MBIA believes this is an extreme response to a safety concern that is already managed through standard protocols.

Surveyors are professionals who prioritize safety. Standard field practice requires the use of high-visibility blaze orange or pink vests and PPE, often making surveyors more visible than the hunters themselves. There is no evidence of a safety crisis involving surveyors and hunters in Maryland that justifies a legislative ban on our right to practice.

As currently written, the bill applies statewide. This means a surveyor working in a dense subdivision in Silver Spring or downtown Baltimore, where no deer hunting occurs, could be criminally liable for stepping across a property line without written permission during these dates.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB0545 - LOO - SHA - Land Surveyors and Property L

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: UNF

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Opposition – Senate Bill 545 – Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors – Private Property Access – Prohibition

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 545 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

SB 545 prohibits a land surveyor or a property line surveyor from conducting a survey on private property during deer firearms hunting season without written permission from the property owner. This restriction would place an unnecessary burden on the State's efforts to maintain, repair, and upgrade critical transportation infrastructure. State Highway Administration's (SHA) concerns include:

- The proposed language is in direct contradiction to Real Property Article 12-111(a)(1). Under current law, civil engineers, land surveyors, real estate appraisers and their assistants acting on behalf of the State are allowed to enter private land for survey purposes following a real and bona fide effort to notify the owner in writing prior to the proposed entry. SB 545 significantly deviates from this precedent in implicating land surveyors working for the State on SHA projects.
- The bill would increase project delays. On a typical transportation project, SHA may enter hundreds of properties. Requiring written permission for this many properties would significantly delay project schedules and jeopardize SHA's project commitments. Land surveying projects for SHA's Office of Highway Development usually take 6 to 9 months. The bill could potentially increase this time by 50% (12 to 18 months) for these services. Also, if property access is denied, a court ordered writ of survey could take additional months. The fiscal impact of this legislation is anticipated to be large due to delays in project schedules.
- The bill would trigger an arduous multi-agency verification beyond what's required today. Additionally, differentiating property lines in the field can be highly challenging. Surveyors could unintentionally be in violation of SB 545 without knowing it. It is not clear how a permittee would be notified when a property is transferred to a new owner. To implement this bill in a manner that mitigates liability, SHA/the State would need to create a tracking

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
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mechanism, linked to the State Department of Assessments and Taxation's property database, to flag properties which have transferred ownership. This would be the only way to ensure compliance in cases where properties have transferred ownership.

- The proposal applies to all private property, even in numerous areas not impacted by hunting activities. The intent of the bill appears to be tied to hunting season activities, but there are numerous urban and suburban areas where hunting is not feasible, but the bill does not attempt to limit the application to only certain properties.
- The proposal makes violations a criminal offense. Surveyors acting on behalf of the State could lose their license to practice, receive a misdemeanor fine of \$500 or up to six months in jail or both. Further, the legislation authorizes the State Board for Professional Land Surveyors to impose a fine not to exceed \$5,000 for each violation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during their deliberations and issue Senate Bill 545 an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

April Moeller
Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-210-5780

Matthew Mickler
Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

SB545_MSS_Unfavorable.pdf

Uploaded by: William Kress

Position: UNF



SB 545 – Land Surveyors – Private Property Access Prohibition

UNFAVORABLE

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair; The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair; and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Maryland Society of Surveyors (MSS)

DATE: February 19, 2026

RE: OPPOSITION to SB 545 (Land Surveyors – Private Property Access – Prohibition)

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Society of Surveyors (MSS), representing the professional land surveying community across the State, respectfully submits this testimony in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to Senate Bill 545.

While we understand the intent of SB 545 is to address landowner concerns regarding property access, the legislation as written creates disproportionate barriers to essential professional services. **By placing a broad restriction on licensed surveyors, the bill effectively imposes a statewide moratorium on routine surveying that will severely damage the real estate and construction industries and prevent surveyors from serving individual homeowners who rely on timely boundary surveys, location surveys, and property line determinations for refinances, fence installations, additions, and other everyday property needs.**

MSS opposes this bill on the following grounds:

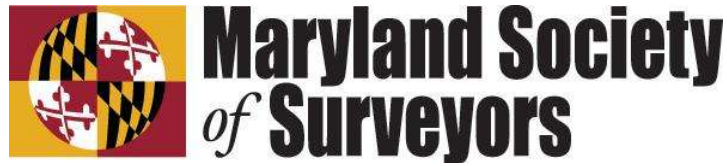
1. The "Adjoiner" Necessity: Why We Enter Private Property

The bill prohibits entering private property without *written* permission during deer firearms season. While most survey work is commissioned by a specific client, **accurate boundary surveys require us to locate evidence on adjoining properties.**

To certify a property line for a homeowner, we are legally and professionally mandated to find monuments (iron pipes, stones) that often sit on a neighbor's land. If a neighbor—who may be an absentee landlord, an LLC, or involved in a boundary dispute—refuses to sign a permission slip, the survey cannot be completed.

2. A "Blackout Period" that Disrupts Real Estate Closings

The Deer Firearms Season creates a significant window of time—typically two weeks in late November/December and additional days in January—during which surveyors



would be effectively banned from working on many properties. This coincides with the busiest time for year-end real estate settlements.

- If a surveyor cannot enter an adjoining property to verify a corner, the survey stops.
- If the survey stops, the mortgage company will not fund the loan.
- **Result:** Families attempting to close on homes will face delays, lost interest rate locks, and breach of contract—all because a surveyor could not obtain a signature from a neighbor.

3. Criminalizing a Licensed Profession

SB 545 does not just impose a fine; it criminalizes our livelihood. Under this bill, a licensed surveyor simply doing their job could be charged with a **misdemeanor**, face up to **6 months in jail**, and be subject to a **\$5,000 civil penalty**.

Criminalizing a professional activity—one that is required by the State for property transfers—is an extreme and unjustified response to a safety concern that is already managed through standard protocols.

4. Surveyors are Safety Experts

Surveyors are professionals who prioritize safety. Standard field practice requires the use of **high-visibility blaze orange or pink vests** and PPE, often making surveyors more visible than the hunters themselves. There is no evidence of a safety crisis involving surveyors and hunters in Maryland that justifies a legislative ban on our right to practice.

5. Urban and Suburban Oversights

As currently written, the bill applies statewide. This means a surveyor working in a dense subdivision in Silver Spring or downtown Baltimore—where no deer hunting occurs—could be criminally liable for stepping across a property line without written permission during these dates.

For these reasons, the Maryland Society of Surveyors urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 545.

Sincerely,

William Bower, PE, PLS

Maryland Society of Surveyors