



Riding To a Different Beat

1218 Sunrise Beach Rd * Crownsville, Md 21032 * 410-215-4979
jacquiecowan@comcast.net

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To the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee

Ref: HB 780 OPPOSED (Repeal of 10:30 Rule)

I am submitting this written testimony against HB 780 on behalf of our standard 300 family members, and as an Association member of the Maryland Horse Council (MHC). I am not opposed to hunting; but rather opposed to hunting on Sundays. I am in favor of shared use and enjoyment by all Marylanders and visitors.

Clubs and equine organizations offer trail rides for their members and guests all over the State of Maryland (including Wicomico), utilizing DNR public lands, parks and private land tracts. In the past before the onslaught of Sunday hunting, rides were hosted on Sundays to stay out of the hunters' way and keep our riders safe on their horses.

The 10:30 am Stopping Rule was a shared compromise the Maryland Horse Council reached with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It was adopted in good faith in many Counties since its first application in Montgomery County. It is even included in DNR's Transfer of Power HB1063 heard in this Committee this past Friday.

This bill's purpose is to repeal the 10:30 Rule in existence in Wicomico County, taking away the opportunity of others to enjoy that County's great outdoors.

On the overall question about Sunday Hunting, the hunters tell you they need Sundays because they work all week and their children have sports on Saturdays. Well, the same is true for most others wanting to have that one day. The deer population is now in a management and preservation mode, so the original reason for Sunday hunting's need to decrease the herds no longer exists. You may not be aware that many horse owners do not have a trailer (or the time) to load up and go somewhere away from home that would be safer to ride. Everyone should have a reasonable expectation to enjoy their lives safely and without worrying of injury.

You have been told in other hearings that there are not enough accidents between hunters and non-hunters on record to warrant concern. But this is not true, in part, because accidents and injuries are reported to local jurisdictions and not forwarded on to DNR. My own case in point ---- during a Club ride on the C&O Canal where hunting is not allowed, we heard hunting in a field up ahead across the road from the Canal. We alerted the hunters of our approach. They stopped firing until we were adjacent to them when they purposely shot toward and over our heads. We immediately called the local police who did not respond, and a record was never made.

I believe there is a much simpler solution to the continued debate over Sundays for hunting, and the patchwork hunting calendar it has caused that would be fairer to the greater Maryland population --- Return to the original NO MORE SUNDAYS at all.

I implore you please – give this HB780 an unfavorable report. And the same for any future bills that would add more Sundays to any species or season.

Respectfully,

Jacquie Cowan

Jacquie Cowan

Association Representative to the Maryland Horse Council
Anne Arundel Coordinator for TROT (Trail Riders of Today)
Event Organizer for Tuckahoe Equestrian Center
Retired Mounted Search and Rescue
Former Volunteer Mounted Patrol (VMP) for DNR