



To: **The Honorable Marc Korman**
 Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
 House Office Building
 Room 251
 11 Bladen Street
 Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **House Bill 1063 – Natural Resources – Hunting – Management**

Position: **Support**

Date: **February 27, 2026**

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, collectively representing the interests of Maryland’s 390,627 sportsmen and women, we respectfully urge you to support House Bill 1063 (HB 1063). This legislation will remove the longstanding and antiquated legislative prohibition on Sunday hunting in Maryland and authorize the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fully manage wildlife species 7 days a week. Additionally, the passage of HB 1063 will greatly benefit the Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) of sportsmen and women in Maryland.

This legislation will provide equity for access and opportunity for the residents of Maryland seeking to participate in their highly regulated outdoor pursuit (hunting). Allowing an additional day on the weekend will greatly assist in the R3 movement, which is critical to conservation and wildlife management. It is important to note that the passage of this legislation will not authorize hunting in State Parks, Natural

Resource Management Areas or other areas already closed to hunting.

Maryland already has had a successful track record of limited, but ever-expanding Sunday hunting opportunities for some game species since 2003 when it was first authorized. HB 1063 expands upon that, providing the wildlife experts within the DNR the ability to fully regulate hunting season dates and bag limits. Additionally, HB 1063 provides the DNR with the ability to allow for Sunday hunting where biologically and sociologically supported, to provide increased opportunity for Maryland's sportsmen and women.

Access is a major limiting factor hindering participation in hunting, and restrictions on Sunday hunting provide a temporal-access barrier to youth and others that work or attend school throughout the week and are often involved in extra-curricular activities on Saturdays. The hunting conservation community strongly supports measures that increase access and opportunity for sportsmen and women, and we encourage you to support HB 1063 to afford all families seven-day hunting opportunities for game species. Under the discretion of the DNR, this legislation would significantly improve access for Maryland hunters and would help arrest the decline in hunting participation. The number of paid hunting license holders in the state decreased by 33.9% from 1985 to 2025 and expanding access and opportunity would help stem the decline and provide increased certainty in conservation funding for the Maryland DNR.

Sportsmen and women are the primary funders of state-level conservation efforts in the state and are thus an important constituency that provides benefits for all Marylanders. In 2025 alone, Maryland's sportsmen and women generated more than \$27.1 million dollars for conservation funding in Maryland through revenue derived from license sales and excise taxes on sporting-related goods in the unique "user pays – public benefits" structure known as the American System of Conservation Funding. This funding provides the lion's share of funding for the Maryland DNR and supports the agency's land acquisitions, wildlife and habitat management programs, and many other programs that benefit all citizens of the "Old Line State".

Allowing Sunday hunting would also significantly benefit Maryland's economy, particularly in rural areas, by increasing economic output and job creation. An additional day to hunt would mean more dollars spent by hunters in restaurants, hotels, gas stations and stores throughout the state. Maryland's sportsmen and women are a significant economic force. In 2020, a study was conducted that revealed Marylanders contributed \$328,000,000 in retail sales, supported 4,100 jobs (\$157,000,000 in salaries and wages), paid \$29,000,000 in state and local taxes, and paid \$41,000,000 in federal taxes. In 2022, a study conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service showed that at a national level, 14.4 million people ages 16 years old and older enjoyed hunting within the United States. Collectively, these hunters hunted 241 million days and took 165 million trips and spent \$45.2B. Additionally, increasing opportunities on Sundays will allow private landowners, farmers, and others to diversify their income sources by allowing an additional day of hunting on their land, thereby helping to provide a capital influx into rural economies that were hardest hit by the previous recession. Creating additional opportunities will also encourage out-of-state hunting-related tourism and further bolster rural economies throughout the state.

The neighboring states of Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Virginia have recently authorized state-wide Sunday hunting and have reported great success, with no increase in conflicts among user groups, safety incidents, or detrimental impacts to their wildlife populations. Please find a supportive letter

attached from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, which details their experiences following the authorization of statewide Sunday hunting a decade ago.

In closing, we ask that you consider the successful track record of ever-expanding seven-day hunting in Maryland, the economic and conservation funding benefits to the state, and the importance of increasing opportunities for youth and families to spend time together hunting and thereby protect family traditions and Maryland's hunting heritage.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Delta Waterfowl
Hunters of Maryland, LLC.
Maryland Bowhunters Society
Maryland Sportsmen's Foundation
National Deer Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Pheasants Forever
Quail Forever
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance

Attached: Sunday Hunting Letter - Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Molly J. Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

Bob Duncan
Executive Director

April 15, 2016

Bee Frederick
Southeastern States Manager
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
624 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Dear Mr. Frederick:

As you are aware, in 2014 the Virginia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 154 and House Bill 1237, which permitted Sunday hunting under certain circumstances. With a few exceptions, Sunday hunting is now permitted for waterfowl and is also allowed for other species by private landowners, their families, or anyone with written permission from the landowner. Hunting of deer or bear with dogs while using a weapon is not permitted on Sundays, and certain limitations pertaining to areas near places of worship and other restrictions were also included in the legislation.

You have inquired as to the results of the implementation of the new Sunday hunting allowances in Virginia, as we have now had it in place for nearly two years. I can report to you that hunting on Sundays has gone well statewide. The Department elected to largely leave hunting seasons in place as they existed previously, and simply allow Sunday hunting as directed by the legislation. Bag limits were likewise left in place as they existed before.

Sunday hunting has not had a detrimental impact upon our deer herd. So far, average deer harvests for Sundays more closely approximate the averages for weekdays, and are far less than Saturdays (approximately 50% of the average Saturday during both archery and muzzleloader seasons, and roughly 20% of the average Saturday during general firearms season). While some had feared that the addition of another day of hunting to the week could lead to an unacceptably high deer harvest, that has not been our experience. Turkey harvests on Sundays have also closely approximated weekday averages.

Another concern of some related to Sunday hunting had been whether it might pose an

undue burden upon our law enforcement officers. Again, to date, those fears have not been realized. Similar to harvest statistics, the number of hunting-related calls to our law enforcement dispatch on Sunday's number similarly to the average weekday, increasing only a modest

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Bee Frederick
Southeastern States Manager
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
April 15, 2016
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amount over the number of calls that were received on Sundays before hunting was allowed. Hunting-related arrests trend similarly.

In sum, I can say that Virginia's experience so far with Sunday hunting is that of additional opportunities for sportsmen and women in the field without unacceptable impacts upon our wildlife resources, notable increases in citizen complaints, or other serious law enforcement concerns. We look forward to the coming seasons and to our hunters continuing to have this additional day available to them.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Duncan
Executive Director

RWD/RJB

CC:

The Honorable Marc Korman (Chair)
The Honorable Michele Guyton (Vice Chair)
The Honorable Nick Allen
The Honorable Kevin Anderson
The Honorable Terry Baker
The Honorable Dylan Behler
The Honorable Regina T. Boyce
The Honorable Linda Foley
The Honorable David Fraser-Hidalgo
The Honorable Robin Grammer
The Honorable Anne Healey
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
The Honorable Jay Jacobs
The Honorable Robbyn Lewis
The Honorable Jeffie E. Long, Jr.
The Honorable Todd B. Morgan
The Honorable Ryan Nawrocki
The Honorable Darrell Odom
The Honorable Dana Stein
The Honorable Natalie Ziegler