

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Helen Bailey and I am a resident of St. Mary's County, Maryland. I am here to voice my support for House Bill 1063 in regards to Sunday hunting and natural resources management.

The last time I testified on this issue, I was a freshman in high school. Now, I am happy to share that I will be graduating with a Bachelors of Science degree in Environmental and Natural Resources from Clemson University and pursuing my Masters degree in Environmental Policy at the University of Cambridge in England starting in October.

My message remains the same as it was in 2019, that the citizens of Maryland should be afforded the same access and opportunities that they have during the other 6 days of the week when it comes to hunting.

Simply put, Sunday hunting restrictions are a result of Blue laws. The intention of Blue laws dates back to the 1700s in order to push Christian church attendance and protect the outlined rest day of society. Operating a business, shopping, playing sports, fishing, and many other activities were prohibited on Sunday. All of these are now allowed on Sunday in Maryland, except hunting.

The North American Model for Wildlife Conservation is known as the most successful system of policies and laws for wildlife. There are 7 pillars to this model and the State of Maryland is currently not following 2 very important pillars by prohibiting Sunday hunting. Number 1 is hunting opportunities for all. Restricting hunting to 6 days a week creates a barrier to children, working class citizens, and students. Hunters were the first conservationists and generate millions of dollars every year through PR to fund conservation initiatives. Expanding access to all Marylanders through Sunday hunting would assist in generating funds for the state of Maryland.

The second pillar is wildlife management being based in science. DNR has teams of biologists that monitor populations, migration patterns, number of hunters, etc. and they set seasons and bag limits annually. They should hold the responsibility of managing Sunday hunting as they manage the other 6 days of the week. Maryland is one of the last remaining states to have migratory bird Sunday hunting restrictions. All of our border states that are also in the Atlantic flyway for migratory birds have Sunday hunting. These birds are following the same migration patterns and the fear of overharvesting has not been evident in surrounding states. Hunting and managing wildlife ethically does not lead to overharvests.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1063.

Thank you,
Helen Bailey