



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 4, 2026

BILL NUMBER: **HOUSE BILL 186**

SHORT TITLE: **NATURAL RESOURCES – BOW HUNTING – SUNDAYS**

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information concerning HB 186. Expanding Sunday hunting opportunities provides additional deer-management tools for the department and local municipalities, which in turn helps to reduce agricultural crop damage, limit deer-vehicle collisions, and decrease conflicts with humans in urban and suburban areas.

Many hunters only have time to hunt on the weekends, so adding Sunday opportunities significantly increases the amount of time they have to hunt. Likewise, many hunters find the evening hours more productive than the morning when deer hunting. Sunday hunting can also be an important hunter recruitment tool for the Department, as it expands hunting opportunities, making it more accessible to a diverse range of individuals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Across the country, 40 states allow all-day Sunday hunting year-round. In Maryland, Sunday hunting is currently open in 20 of 23 counties to varying degrees. Some counties allow all-day Sunday hunting while others are restricted to a 10:30 am cutoff. Some counties allow Sunday hunting on public and private lands, while others only allow private land hunting. And some counties allow most game species to be hunted while others only allow deer to be hunted on Sundays. It can be challenging for hunters and DNR-alike to keep track of what, when, and where Sunday hunting can take place in the state. HB 186 would simplify current Sunday hunting law.

In the spring and summer of 2025, the department collaborated with various stakeholders to gather feedback on the existing legal restrictions on Sunday hunting and explore potential solutions to the discord between some user groups. Through this process, the department utilized the stakeholder feedback and worked with the Natural Resources and Open Space Subcommittee Chair on legislation that takes a broader approach to addressing Sunday hunting restrictions. This approach would give the department the authority to set Sunday hunting seasons and bag limits, as it currently does for Monday-Saturday. The department would use its current biennial stakeholder and public input process, including input from local and county authorities, to determine the Sunday hunting structure that is most compatible with all Marylanders.

BILL EXPLANATION

HB 186 removes the hunting prohibition for the remaining Sundays that are currently closed to archery deer hunting and wild turkey hunting. Any additional wild turkey Sunday hunting opportunities would be with bow and arrow only. The bill also removes the 10:30 am Sunday hunting end time requirement during deer archery season and turkey season in those counties that currently require it.

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