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MAYOR

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HB186

February 4, 2026

TO: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 186 – Natural Resources - Bow Hunting - Sundays

POSITION: Favorable

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 186.

HB 186 would provide statewide authorization to the Department of Natural Resources to allow a person to hunt deer on Sundays throughout the deer bow hunting season and to hunt turkey using a bow and arrow on Sundays throughout the turkey hunting season.

Hunting of any kind is categorically prohibited on public lands within Baltimore City. However, bow hunting is legal in Baltimore City on private property so long as you maintain the 450 ft. safety zone as regulated by the state, hunt on property you own/have permission to hunt on and have a state deer hunting license. While bow hunting on private property is legal under the above circumstances, the ability to do so with a "mini" crossbow with a length less than 18 inches is a criminal offense (Baltimore City Code, Article 19, § 59-24(c)(2)).

Many state wildlife agencies have been removing Sunday hunting bans which were initially established to enforce Sabbath observance and incentivize church attendance. Allowing Sunday hunting will provide hunters with additional opportunities to harvest their desired game animal, especially if their schedules prevent them from hunting during the week. Removing Sunday hunting bans also better reflects cultural shifts in the United States as more people shift away from traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs. . In addition, residents' schedules are becoming increasingly complex, and Sundays may be their one chance to hunt in any given week. As our country continues to diversify, culturally mindful legislation like this will encourage new communities to participate in the sport of hunting which will have cascading, positive effects for conservation efforts. The additional day of hunting also facilitates state efforts in controlling an ever-increasing deer population.

Though the amount of privately owned land within the City is limited, we support this legislation. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 186.