



Hills Bridge Beagles

Testimony HB 1063 – Natural Resources - Hunting - Management

House Committee on the Environment and Transportation

Position: OPPOSE

Good afternoon, Chairman Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce and Honorable Committee Members

My name is Margaret Crane. I am the Joint Master of the Hills Bridge Beagles, a beagling foot pack that hunts in all the Southern Maryland Counties. The Hills Bridge Beagles (HBB) are recognized foot pack by the National Beagle Club, the AKC parent club of Beagle breed.

The HBB was formed more than 40 years ago. The pack has between 60-80 followers that come out one or more times in any given season. Our followers range from the very young to the young at heart. Beagling gives people who might not otherwise have the opportunity, a chance to get out in the natural areas, farms and countryside to enjoy all the beauty Southern Maryland has to offer.

As a threshold matter, I and the HBB completely support hunting in Maryland. I allow hunters to hunt my farm. The issue I have with HB 1063 is a very personal one, this bill will allow DNR to regulate Sunday hunting in Counties where Sunday hunting has not been allowed. If HB 1063 is passed, the effect will be the woods will be completely dedicated to the deer hunters. What does this mean for the HBB and its many followers? What it means is the HBB can either stay out of the woods all together, effectively denying our members an opportunity to get in the woods, or the HBB can run the risk of running into deer hunters who are empowered to believe that no one else should be in the woods.

A telling story about what the future holds if DNR makes all the decisions unchecked by the legislature – in 1999 Outdoors Maryland followed the Hills Bridge Beagles for several days in the field. One of the farms the film crew went to with us was Holly Beach in Anne Arundel County, Holly Beach is on the Chesapeake Bay next the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. The video taken by Outdoors Maryland on Holly Beach won an Emmy and was voted Maryland's Favorite all-time dog video. I would note that the HBB can no longer hunt on the farm shown in the

Outdoors Maryland video. Several years after Outdoors Maryland shot that video the farm was purchased by Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the management of the farm was turned over to DNR. Once the management of Holly Beach was turned over to DNR, the farm was limited solely to deer hunting. The Beagles have never been allowed to use that farm even one time in the decades that followed, which is a sad commentary on resource management by DNR. DNR picks winner and losers, deer hunters are the winners and other users are the losers.

The Maryland legislature needs to continue its oversight over DNR because bureaucrats cannot be trusted to look out for the interests of the many different users of our beautiful Maryland natural resources.

If you're interested in seeing the video on the HBB on Outdoors Maryland you can do that using the following link <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-394-23hx3m9f> . Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before this committee.

Margaret Crane