

**Wayne H. Bell
6682 J. Oren Road
Easton, Md 21601**

(410) 820-6002

February 1, 2026

**REF: House Bill 186
Natural Resources – Bow Hunting – Sundays**

Position: OPPOSED

I am submitting this letter as formal testimony **against HOUSE BILL 186** which essentially proposes to permit non-firearm hunting in all regions of Maryland on every Sunday during the hunting seasons for deer and turkey.

I am a birder who is a member of the Statewide Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) and Secretary of the MOS Talbot County Chapter who assists in scheduling the Chapter's weekly bird walks for its members and guests. I also assist with the MOS Youth Program (YMOS) which helps K-12 youngsters develop their birding skills through monthly field trips to selected locations in Maryland and Delaware. There are currently about 30 young birders participating in the YMOS.

Personally, I have no objection whatsoever to legitimate hunting and in fact applaud hunters for the funds they raise on behalf of wildlife habitat conservation. I am also familiar with past efforts to expand Sunday hunting in Maryland. Success of some of these efforts has resulted in the gradual erosion of available hunting-free dates in various regions of our State. In effect, **HOUSE BILL 186** proposes to complete this erosion State-wide during the deer and turkey seasons.

Many of my birding colleagues and I view this issue as a final reduction of a State-wide shared resource, *i.e.*, the use of public lands by all of its citizens. As Sunday hunting has increased, birders have worked to accommodate the changes by altering their field trip schedules to non-hunting days so as not to interfere with legitimate hunters' activities. It is our belief that our presence should not be a factor in disturbing wildlife or otherwise negatively influencing the success of hunters in the field. State-wide Sunday hunting effectively eliminates this shared resource during the deer and turkey seasons. It will put the birding and hunting communities at odds without recourse to what until now has been an effective informal collaboration. The outcome of **HOUSE BILL 286** will be to the detriment of both communities.

As a birder who respects the needs of legitimate hunters, I believe that there are feasible, collaborative solutions that respect the use of Maryland's shared outdoor resources for all. **HOUSE BILL 286** fails in this regard and must not be adopted.

Sincerely yours,

Wayne H. Bell, Ph.D.
6682 J. Oren Road
Easton, MD 21601