

Maryland Military Coalition SB0588 Written Testimo

Uploaded by: David Lutzow

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report – SB0588 – Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations**

Dear Chair Korman and distinguished members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition¹ (MMC) I write to ask for a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on SB0588 – **Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire. **The Senate unanimously passed this bill.**

Senator Simonaire's bill addresses, under specific situations, free or complimentary fishing, hunting, and recreational oyster licenses, such as:

- Complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to game and fishing department enforcement officers from other states. Maryland is not the first state to offer such reciprocity licenses. Throughout the nation, many neighboring states offer complimentary hunting and fishing licenses. Adjacent to Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are just a few examples.
- Changing the language from "shall" to "may", providing the Department of Natural Resources more flexibility with who should or should not receive a complementary recreational oyster lifetime license.
- Adding criteria for issuing complementary recreational oyster license for specific out-of-state residents.
- Adding the requirement to publish statistical reports that track the number of licenses sold, and the number of complimentary and lifetime complimentary licenses issued.

Licensing is a privilege, not a right. It's essential that the individual(s) entrusted to issue licenses has a clear understanding of who is and who is not eligible for licensure. This is why The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports** SB0588 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Environment and Transportation Committee.

¹ See attached list of member organizations

Subject: Request FAVORABLE Report – SB0588 – Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 21 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups. It represents over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers and survivors. For further information please visit our [website](#).

We want to thank Senator Simonaire for sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

David Lutzow

David Lutzow
Senior Master Sergeant (Ret), U.S. Air Force
Director



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars

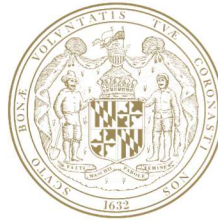
Del. Ziegler Rural Caucus Letter of Support

Uploaded by: Del. Natalie Ziegler Del. Natalie Ziegler

Position: FAV

JEFFERSON L. GHRIST
Co-CHAIR

NATALIE ZIEGLER
Co-CHAIR



H. KEVIN ANDERSON
TERRY BAKER
KEVIN B. HORNBERGER
ANDRE V. JOHNSON, JR.
STEVE JOHNSON
SHEREE SAMPLE-HUGHES

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
HOUSE RURAL CAUCUS

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment & Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Korman and Honorable Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the Rural Caucus, we are writing to express our support **for SB 558 Chesapeake Bay - Enhancement Program and Maryland Seafood Industry Financial Assistance Fund - Established.**

This legislation directly addresses an urgent economic crisis affecting Maryland's rural and coastal communities, particularly commercial watermen and oyster harvesters who are facing unprecedented financial hardship. With the oyster industry suffering through perhaps their worst season in living memory due to the Potomac River sewage spill, salmonella concerns, and the January deep-freeze, existing programs through MARBIDCO lack the capacity to provide the large-scale emergency loans needed to stabilize these small businesses.

SB558 provides for these loans and strengthens coordination between MARBIDCO and the Department of Natural Resources to enable more effective loan administration and access to critical financial support for licensed watermen. By facilitating timely emergency lending and supporting the long-term resilience of the seafood industry, the bill helps protect jobs, sustain rural economies, and preserve Maryland's vital agricultural and natural resource sectors.

For these reasons, the Rural Caucus supports SB 558 and requests a favorable report.

Thank you,

Handwritten signature of Jefferson L. Ghrist in black ink.

Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist
Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Natalie Ziegler in black ink.

Delegate Natalie Ziegler
Co-Chair

SB 588 Senator Simonaire_FAV_ENT.pdf

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV

BRYAN W. SIMONAIRE
Legislative District 31
Anne Arundel County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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Bryan.Simonaire@senate.state.md.us

The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 588 – Repeal the commemorative lifetime hunting license

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 588.

I have worked with the *Department of Natural Resources* on this consensus legislation.

The bill does 3 main things:

1. This bill primarily standardizes our numerous complimentary licensing sections in the *Natural Resources* article, so we have a consistent and equitable policy, and clarifies certain items that are silent in other sections,
2. It updates DNR's existing hunting reporting to provide statistics for complimentary and lifetime hunting licenses granted in the previous year, and
3. It repeals an obsolete commemorative lifetime hunting license program that hasn't been active for 15 years, and according to DNR, it has no intention of reviving.

So, to provide a little more detail:

1. There are three main complimentary licenses: Hunting, Fishing and Recreational Oystering. Each have little differences, such as, one says '*shall issue*'; the other says, '*may issue*'. The Department wants it to consistently say '*may issue*' as there may be situations where they are not allowed to give complimentary licenses. Another example is the number of outstanding complimentary licenses allowed from other states.
2. The second item provides reporting insight into how many complimentary and lifetime licenses are being issued, and

3. The final part of this bill simply repeals an old complimentary lifetime license program that was only active for one year and has been obsolete since 2011 with no plans to re-establish it.

For all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.

Complimentary License	Section	May Issue	Reciprocal	20 Limit	No Fee	Blind	Lifetime	Terms
Angler	4-607	✓	Revise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chesapeake Sport Fishing	4-475	✓	Revise	✓	Add	✓	✓	✓
Osyter	4-1004.1	Revise	N/A*	N/A*	Add	Clarify	Clarify	Revise
Hunting	10-303	✓	✓	Add	Add	UDP	✓	✓

✓ - Means Exist Currently

Revise: Revises existing provision to standardize with other sections.

Add: Adds new provision to standardize with other sections.

Clarify: Clarifies existing provision to standardize with other sections.

UDP: Existing *Universal Disability Pass* may apply to Blind.

Notes: * - DNR has long standing policy not granting out-of-state oyster licensing.

SB0588_DNR_SUP_ENT_4-1-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Lydia McPherson

Position: FAV



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

April 1, 2026

BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 588 - FIRST READER

SHORT TITLE: NATURAL RESOURCES - COMPLIMENTARY FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES - ALTERATIONS

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

Senate Bill 588 creates a complimentary sport fishing license privilege for enforcement officers of game and fish departments of other states that reciprocally offer a complimentary sport fishing license to the enforcement officers of the Maryland Natural Resources Police. The Department supports this aspect of the bill as it may provide additional opportunities for Natural Resources Police officers to receive complimentary licenses in other states.

This reciprocity already exists for hunting licenses, and therefore, this bill creates more consistency between Maryland's complimentary fishing and hunting license provisions. Furthermore, the number of complimentary fishing licenses that the Department may issue is already capped at 20 licenses per state. Senate Bill 588 also creates the same cap of 20 licenses per state for hunting licenses, and the Department supports this additional consistency.

The Department was supportive of amendments to remove the provisions of Senate Bill 588 affecting Natural Resources Article, §4-1004.1, Annotated Code of Maryland that pertain to offering complimentary recreational oyster licenses to various categories of nonresidents. Nonresidents have been prohibited from harvesting oysters in Maryland for more than a century, and the Department does not support making any changes to that restriction at this time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department of Natural Resources currently issues a number of complimentary hunting and fishing licenses under Natural Resources Article, §§4-607, 4-745, 4-1004.1, and 10-303.

BILL EXPLANATION

Senate Bill 588 modifies complimentary sport fishing and hunting license privileges.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)

HOM Testimony for SB 588 re Complimentary Fishing

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

April 1, 2026

HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE

SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 588 (Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing & Hunting
Licenses)

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite 100% of all wildlife management/research costs through their purchase of hunting license fees/ equipment. For the record, hunters do so willingly b/c of American System of Conservation Funding, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists.

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net])
Bill Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

The Hunters of Maryland, LLC supports Senator Simonaire's Senate Bill 588 for the following reasons:

RECOGNIZES SERVICE, SACRIFICE, AND ACHIEVEMENT: Extending complimentary hunting licenses to eligible recipients is a meaningful way to honor public service, sacrifice, and notable achievement. It reflects Maryland's longstanding outdoor heritage and affirms our respect for those who have given of themselves in service to others.

STRENGTHENS RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND REACTIVATION (THE "3 R's"): Senate Bill 588 aligns with the nationally recognized "3 R's" movement—recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters. Encouraging new participants and re-engaging inactive hunters strengthens Maryland's conservation community and increases federal Wildlife Restoration

funding through the Pittman-Robertson Act. A strong and growing hunting population directly supports wildlife conservation and habitat management.

PROMOTES EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY: For some individuals who would otherwise qualify under Senate Bill 588, cost can be a barrier to participation. Providing targeted complimentary licenses: (1) removes economic barriers; (2) expands opportunities to participate in hunting; and (3) enhances diversity and inclusion within Maryland's outdoor community.

ADMINISTRATION: Senate Bill 588 clearly defines eligibility criteria, caps the number of licenses issued annually, requires full compliance with all existing hunting laws and regulations, and preserves oversight authority within the Department of Natural Resources. The bill is structured, limited, and responsible.

MINIMAL FISCAL IMPACT: Because the number of complimentary licenses is narrowly defined and limited by statute, the fiscal impact will be minimal.

CONCLUSION: The Hunters of Maryland, LLC view Senate Bill 588 as sound public policy. It benefits eligible recipients, strengthens conservation funding, and reinforces Maryland's commitment to outdoor heritage. It also underscores an important principle affirmed by Chapters 295 and 296 of the Acts of 2021: in Maryland, the RIGHT TO FISH AND HUNT is recognized in statute and valued as part of our shared tradition.

HB0558 Heather Tinelli QAC Econ and Tourism Develo

Uploaded by: Heather Tinelli

Position: INFO



**Queen
Anne's
County**
MARYLAND

**Position Statement SB558:
Chesapeake Bay- Enhancement Program and Maryland Seafood
Industry Financial Assistance Fund-Established**

POSITION: Letter of Information

TO: House Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Heather Tinelli, Director Queen Anne's County Economic &
Tourism Development

DATE: 3/30/26

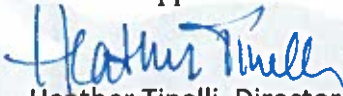
Queen Anne's County hosts one of the largest concentrations of commercial watermen in the state and is home to the last working waterfront. The maritime industry is an important legacy industry to the county and the state of Maryland.

The commercial watermen have been faced with burdensome regulations, market uncertainty and environmental factors beyond their control. These businesses are struggling with little outside state/federal assistance as compared to support provided to the Agricultural community; therefore, we support the establishment of the Maryland Seafood Industry Financial Assistance fund to provide financial assistance to commercial watermen and small businesses.

We also ask that you allocate ongoing funding to the Maryland Seafood Industry Financial Assistance fund and that it includes both loan and grant opportunities.

Lastly, we support MARBIDCO to manage this program as the organization has a proven track record of supporting the resource-based economy, especially the Agriculture and Seafood industries.

We appreciate your time and consideration of this proposed legislation and the support of our local watermen and Maryland's seafood industry.


Heather Tinelli, Director

County Commissioners:

James J. Moran, At Large
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1
Patrick McLaughlin, District 2
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

Economic & Tourism Development

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