

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 481

(Delegate Hutchinson, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization

This bill authorizes a person to receive a raffle ticket for each antlerless deer hunted by the person during a raffle program that (1) is held in January; (2) has as its objective the hunting of antlerless deer; and (3) was previously held at least once from January 1, 2020, through January 30, 2024, inclusive. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law:

Prohibition against Selling Deer

Generally, a person may not sell, offer for sale, barter, or exchange, at any time within the State, any game bird or mammal taken from the wild in the State or in another state, territory, or county. However, the prohibition does not apply to the legally acquired (1) meat, pelt, carcass, or mounted specimen of any beaver, coyote, fisher, fox, mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, otter, raccoon, skunk, or long-tailed weasel; (2) hide, hair, tail, or feet of deer, squirrel, or rabbit (excluding a mounted specimen); (3) feathers, skin, or feet of upland and forest game birds (excluding a mounted specimen); (4) unless prohibited

by federal law, feathers of wetland game birds; or (5) antlers of deer legally acquired in another state and manufactured into an article of commerce in another state.

Deer Hunting Seasons in General

In general, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals by regulation each year. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. There are three primary seasons to hunt deer in Maryland: deer bow hunting season; deer firearms season; and deer muzzleloader season. Deer hunting with archery equipment extends from early September through the end of January. Firearms season is two weeks in November and December starting the Saturday after Thanksgiving. There is also a short, three-day firearms season in January. There are two muzzleloader seasons: one in mid-October; and a second in late December. There is also a three-day primitive deer hunt in early February.

Small Business Effect: To the extent that incentivizing the harvest of antlerless deer results in an increase in overall deer hunting in the State, the bill may have a meaningful economic impact on certain types of businesses in the State. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that, in 2011, the average hunter in Maryland spent \$49 per hunting day on trip-related expenditures. In 2011, the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation estimated that hunters in Maryland spend more than \$260 million annually on food, lodging, equipment, and transportation.

In addition to businesses directly affected by hunting, to the extent the bill results in a decrease in the deer population throughout the State, the bill may also affect several other types of businesses, such as farms (due to a reduction in crop damage) and businesses that own or repair vehicles (due to a reduction in deer-vehicle collisions).

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 934 and SB 779 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: SB 367 (Senator Mautz) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 9, 2024
km/lgc Third Reader - March 14, 2024

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