

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee



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March 4, 2020

Senate Bill 930 – Natural Resources – Resident Canada Geese – Restrictions on Shooting in Charles County

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 930 – Natural Resources - Resident Canada Geese - Restrictions on Shooting in Charles County. Senate Bill 930 deals with hunting resident geese in Southern Maryland. There are two different goose seasons in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's County: one for Atlantic Population Geese who migrate and leave the contiguous 48 states, and one for resident population geese who live in the contiguous 48 states all year, to include the migrant geese we have in Southern Maryland that migrate to upstate New York but do not enter Canada.

US Route 301 through Charles County serves as the dividing line between the Atlantic Population, which live on the east side of Route 301 and the resident population geese, which live on the west side of Route 301. Slightly less than half of Charles County is east of Route 301, and slightly more than half of Charles County is west of Route 301.

The season on the west side of Route 301 is over 70 hunting days with a daily limit of five birds. On the east side of Route 301, the season is 30 hunting days with a daily limit of one bird. Both St. Mary's and Calvert Counties have the shorter season and smaller bag limits. The same geese spend the night in the Allens Fresh Natural Area and on the Wicomico River. Surprisingly, if the geese fly east or west, the season is different and the limit is significantly different.

Because of this, farmers and landowners who have a blind or field west of Route 301 may receive \$10,000 for hunting rent, where farmers and landowners east of Route 301 may only receive \$1,000. This monetary disparity creates a financial disadvantage to farmers and landowners who live east of Route 301 in Charles County, or in St. Mary's or Calvert Counties.

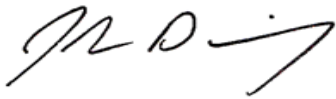
When the Department of Natural Resources originally proposed this regulation for controlling the resident goose population in Maryland, the line was to divide St. Mary's County and include almost all of Charles County. The purpose of these lines does not make sense and is not clear – either we should let all of Southern Maryland hunt, or eliminate hunting that could affect the migratory Atlantic Population of Canada geese. The geese do not understand that Route 301 is

a dividing line, and now more food and farming methods are changing west of Route 301 making it more desirable for birds to stay west of 301.

I have filed this legislation with the intent of creating an even playing field for the farmers, hunters, and landowners as well as the geese in Southern Maryland. While Senate Bill 930 as written only discusses Charles and St. Mary's County, I have drafted an amendment to the bill to expand it to cover all of Southern Maryland equally.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 930 with the amendment I have offered. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey', written in a cursive style.

Senator Jack Bailey

District 29

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