

March 10, 2020

Dear Members of the House Committee on the Environment and Transportation:

I write to implore you to **OPPOSE HB 1129** -- the **Deer Hunting Bill which increases the number of Sundays to hunt with a firearm** -- and affects every outdoor enthusiast in your district, not just hunters.

Despite its wealth, there are no parks in Talbot County in which to ride horses or where nature lovers can deeply engage with the outdoors. We can look forward to the day when the 107 acre Frederick Douglas Park is open for visitors, but many bird watchers and dog walkers are compelled to recreate on private land. Many horse owners do not own horse trailers; indeed, private land is the only place that they *can* ride. Some property owners feel they should be able to do whatever they want on their own property; but what they do on their *own* property can have a direct impact on their neighbors' ability to enjoy *their* property.

I like to ride in the woods behind my house. However, I am surrounded by several landowners who rent their property to hunters, and the property lines all abut each other in the woods. Bullets and arrows do not respect these property lines, and even if they did, the sound of gunshots -- and the fear of being shot -- deter me from enjoying the outdoors during the best times of the year, and for weeks -- even months -- at a time. We need to encourage children to get outside and explore nature rather than create obstacles to the outdoors.

The horse industry's \$2.1 billion impact on Maryland's economy is huge. Horse farms make up 10% of Maryland's land, and pastures are among the best filtering devices to protect the Bay from runoff. Other advantages of pastures? They are excellent absorbers of carbon dioxide, they are critical habitat for many grassland bird species that are in severe decline, and they provide open space for all to enjoy.

So in the name of equity for all and science for a better environment, please vote against the above-referenced bill.

Respectfully,
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ATTACHMENTS: Current Sunday Hunting Calendar
Economic Impact Flyer (2 pages) from MD Horse Industry Board