

March 8, 2021

OPPOSE

SENATE BILL 605 (Queen Anne's County) Expansion of Sundays for Hunting

Although my husband and I live in Talbot County, we enjoy spending time (and money!) in neighboring Queen Anne's County – walking in Tuckahoe State Park, biking, horseback riding, and birdwatching at many locations in Queen Anne's County.

Please do not support more Sunday Hunting bills! Leave the remaining Sundays open to all Maryland enthusiasts – Share our Land!

FACT: ...the overall deer harvested from 2008 to 2018 has gradually been declining
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/MD-Annual-Deer-Report-2017-2018.pdf>

FACT: in the Wildlife Damage to Agriculture Interest in Maryland report with 99 Eastern Shore Farmers said they were 68% Very Satisfied with the Crop Damage Permits; 20% were Somewhat Satisfied and Less than 5% were Dissatisfied. This program is state-wide and year-round and the DNR says this program is underutilized. There's more opportunity here for hunters.

http://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Documents/wildlifedamageag.pdf

FACT: Success Story—Chester River QDM Cooperative (*without Sunday Hunting*)

- Grown to include 10+/- farms in Queen Anne's County with more requesting membership.
- Hunting rules include strict limits on bucks taken (via antler size).
- Places intense hunting pressure on adult does (most productive in herd).

Results:

- Hunters have reduced deer densities nicely.
- Crop yields have gone up considerably.

http://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Documents/wildlifedamageag.pdf

FACT: Maryland White-Tailed Deer Plan 2009-2018

http://dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Hunt_Traps/pdfs/2009-2018MarylandWTDeerPlan.pdf

Recreation Goal (pg 43): Provide the opportunity for all citizens to safely, fairly and ethically enjoy diverse deer related recreational experiences and traditions consistent with established deer population trend goals.

Objective 3, Strategy 3: Ensure that deer hunting regulations are responsive to the needs and traditions of the hunting community while remaining compatible with the expectations of the majority of the public.

Objective 4, Strategy 3: Evaluate the safety and efficacy of new hunting techniques, seasons or weapons and review these for compatibility with hunter expectations and acceptance by the general public.

FACT: Large Landowners (who support hunting) and Maryland Residents do NOT support Sunday hunting. http://dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Hunt_Trap/pdfs/2009-2018MarylandWTDDeerPlan.pdf – Page 64

LANDOWNERS' USES OF LAND AND HUNTING PERMISSION ON LANDS

Opposition exceeds support for deer hunting on Sundays in Maryland among Maryland residents.

Large landowners are like residents in that opposition exceeds support for hunting deer on Sundays.

An overwhelming majority of large landowners allow deer hunting on their property. However, most of those who allow hunting allow only friends and family. Of those who allow others besides friends and family to hunt on their property, just more than a 25% charge hunters for that privilege.

- Reasons for allowing only friends and family include:
- not wanting strangers on the property,
- concern about personal safety,
- limit crowding on the land, the poor behavior of hunters, and legal liability.
- In line with their majority opposition to Sunday hunting, large landowners are less likely to allow Sunday deer hunting on their property than to allow it. *(Therefore, the hunters might want more Sunday hunting, but the Large Landowners who control the private lands, have final say, and do NOT want Sunday hunting.)*

Conclusion:

Hunters have 6 days a week to hunt in all Eastern Shore Counties with an additional 9-15 Sundays during the archery & firearm seasons. Not many non-Sundays remain gun and arrow free. When walking/riding through the woods or fields, the public should be able to move freely without looking over their shoulder for a hunter in their vicinity.

*WIN/WIN approach: Allowing the Hunters to keep their weekend day, Saturday only, then they are likely to have an uninterrupted, successful hunt without other dogs, horses, human voices and scents interruptions. The public can plan their outdoor days to avoid hunting days as much as possible. **Let's keep the balance we have for ALL Marylanders.***

Respectfully Submitted,

*Joyce and Wayne Bell
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