

DANA M. STEIN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees
Chair, Environment
Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Open Space



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3527 · 301-858-3527
800-492-7122 Ext. 3527
Fax 410-841-3509 · 301-858-3509
Dana.Stein@house.state.md.us

The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 293

Natural Resources-Organized Killing Contests-Restrictions

Chairman Barve and Committee members:

This bill is identical to HB 893, the bill we and the House passed last year, but because of the shortened session, wasn't considered in the Senate.

We spend a lot of time in ENT discussing bills that concern hunting - hunting that is regulated by DNR.

This bill deals with a practice that has nothing to do with responsible hunting: wildlife killing contests, whose goal is to kill the most, the heaviest, or the smallest animals, by whatever means possible. They are conducted for prizes or monetary awards. Hundreds of animals may be killed. Most contests involve fox, coyotes or raccoons. Sometimes, their bodies are dumped as trash.

The contests are not to provide food for anyone, nor to protect the environment, nor as part of a responsible species management program. Science has shown they do not protect livestock, nor do they increase deer numbers.

This bill is crafted to ban *only* these killing contests of foxes, coyotes and raccoons for prizes and monetary rewards. It would not affect the continued lawful, regulated hunting of these animals in Maryland. The bill also would continue to allow hound trials.

HB 293 also does not prevent people from killing these animals because of conflicts on their own property.

The bill's purpose is similar to the moratorium on the killings of cownose rays that we've passed. We passed these laws to prohibit the slaughter of animals done only for the sake of winning prizes for killing the most or the heaviest.

Wildlife killing contests do not align with Maryland's hunting traditions of sportsmanship and fair chase. Opponents may say that these contests are done for predator management. But science-based wildlife management says otherwise. Many wildlife management professionals and hunting groups criticize these contests because they're not based in science, in addition to being cruel. Attached to my testimony is three pages of statements from a variety of officials.

Seven states have already banned these events: California, Vermont, New Mexico, Arizona, Massachusetts, Colorado, and Washington state. Maryland should join them.