



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: Senate Bill 497

Short Title: Deer Management Permit - Hunting on State Land Leased by Permit Holder - Authorization

Department's Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department's Position

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on SB 497.

Deer Management Permits (DMPs) are issued by DNR to help landowners and farmers resolve legitimate damage to commercial farm crops, orchards, nurseries and certain managed forests. In Baltimore County, Charles County, Calvert County, St. Mary's County, and Harford County, an individual who hunts deer under a DMP may: use a shotgun or breech loading centerfire rifle approved by DNR to hunt deer throughout the year, including all deer hunting seasons, in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit. Permit holders may also hunt on state lands that are leased to cultivate crops in those five counties in locations and under conditions set by DNR in the permit.

This bill expands the use of DMPs from the five counties noted above to all public lands in all counties in Maryland beginning July 1, 2022. The bill also authorizes all DMP permit holders throughout the state to use specified weapons, including centerfire rifles, to hunt deer throughout the year, including all deer hunting seasons, in the locations and under the conditions set forth in a permit. Currently only certain firearms are legal for deer hunting in certain counties. In addition to several other locations across the state, HB 592 would authorize the University of Maryland, Wye Education Center to harvest deer on a Deer Management Permit outside of the regular deer hunting seasons and bag limits in Queen Anne's county.

DNR supports expanded hunting opportunities and supports deer harvest on public lands in certain circumstances so long as public safety issues are addressed and certain land areas are excluded such as a field edge along a park trail or a day use area that is regularly used by park visitors.

Instead of *requiring* DNR, and other public land holders, to award DMPs and allow the use of specified weapons, it may be more prudent to instead *authorize* DNR, and other public land holders, to award DMPs in all counties and provide those public landholders discretion over the locations and permit conditions.

For any additional information, please contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.

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