



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

Bill Number: House Bill 1279

Short Title: Sunday Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones-Statewide Authorization and Establishment

Department's Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department's Position

HB1279 would authorize Sunday hunting opportunities for all game species on Sundays during legal seasons on private property in every county in Maryland, and public lands designated for hunting by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (the Department or DNR). It would also establish a uniform statewide safety zone for archery hunters that extends for 50 yards from a dwelling house, residence, church or any other building or camp occupied by human beings. A standard currently held in 10 Maryland counties.

Hunting remains the most cost-effective method for controlling the deer population throughout Maryland. The Department recognizes and supports the fact that Sunday hunting has contributed positively to managing the state's white-tailed deer population in the 20 counties where it is now permitted. Sunday hunting can be especially important if the weather causes unfavorable hunting conditions on the Saturday of the same weekend. Likewise, many hunters only have time to hunt on weekends, so allowing Sunday hunting essentially doubles their opportunity to pursue deer.

Despite the success of our current deer hunting model, we are still struggling to mitigate the negative impacts of expanding deer populations in Maryland's suburbs. One of the limiting factors to hunter success in those areas is the requirement for all hunters, including those using archery equipment, to setback 150 yards from any residence or potentially occupied building. This distance requirement effectively eliminates a significant number of otherwise legal and impactful hunting locations.

Recognizing that nearly 90% of the deer taken by archers in Maryland are hunted on private land, it is difficult to increase the overall harvest without providing hunters additional opportunities on those private lands. Reducing the 150-yard setback requirement to 50 yards effectively triples the areas available to hunters. This change offers one of the few remaining cost-effective and reasonable options to increasing the deer harvest in any county and will

Contact: Bunky Luffman, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
Bunky.luffman1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-689-9165

contribute to an increase in the efficacy of hunting as a deer management and damage-abatement tool in those areas.

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