



Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus
The Sportsmen's Best Friend

March 2, 2022

THE HONORABLE KUMAR P. BARVE
Chair, House Environment & Transportation Committee
HONORABLE MEMBERS

RE: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 1067 (WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT – NIGHTTIME SHOOTING)

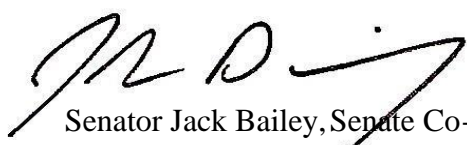
The bi-partisan Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus commends Delegate Stein for his introduction of House Bill 1067 as a reasonable means of achieving an equitable balance between the taking and conserving of deer beyond recreational hunting *per se*, aka special permitted taking of deer granted certain landowners.

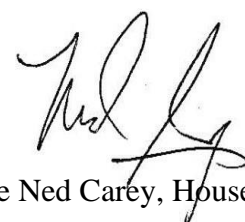
The way section NR §10-206 currently reads, DNR is vested with broad authority to permit nighttime shooting of deer through regulation, notwithstanding NR §10-410 which prohibits nighttime shooting of deer, among other things. Legislation to prohibit nighttime shooting of deer was introduced in 2018 (SB 747 introduced by then Senator John Astle) as a pre-emptive measure to prohibit the Administration from even thinking of allowing "legalized jacklighting" by the farming community, which was rumored at the time. SEHEA reported the bill out but failed on 3rd Reader. There was no House companion bill that Session. As suspected, the Administration subsequently promulgated regulations authorizing nighttime shooting of deer, albeit under strict permitting guidelines from February 1 through March 31.

The farming community is once again seeking expanded nighttime shooting of deer, courtesy of a compliant Administration. Landowners not content with their kill rate via existing management tools – two months at nighttime shooting ("Deer Cooperator Permit" and "Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit") plus 365 days of harvesting, including all Sundays, if approved for a DNR-issued "Deer Management Permit" - now want even more nighttime shooting permission. House Bill 1067 would prevent this from happening because NR §10-206 would no longer be a means for allowing a select few to kill deer in large numbers beyond yearly recreational hunting season. Please keep in mind Delegate Stein's proposed legislation, if enacted, represents a "First" in Maryland because it would: (1) recognize in statute the economic dilemma facing landowners linked to crop damages caused by deer; (2) ensure that existing tools to help mitigate such damage are sanctioned by statute; and (3) codify 2-months of nighttime shooting of deer as an intended last resort when seemingly all other control measures fail.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, it is important to remember that deer are a publicly owned resource, not the property of any one individual. Admittedly, deer cause economic losses to landowners, both farmers and those who own forest lands. However, management tools do exist for deer-related mitigation outside the recreational hunting season and anything beyond 365 days of killing deer, coupled with 2 months of killing this publicly-owned resource at night, is ethically wrong in the eyes of the Caucus and the hunting community.

Sincerely,


Senator Jack Bailey, Senate Co-Chair


Delegate Ned Carey, House Co-Chair