MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS

The Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus was formed in 2001, and was one of the original 21 caucuses to unite under the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, having joined in December of 2004. The Caucus has racked up an impressive track record of success, including: authorizing Sunday hunting of deer for the first time since 1723; enacting the Maryland Hunting Heritage Protection Act; protecting fishing opportunities on the Chesapeake Bay by the Freedom to Fish Act; defeating efforts to impose a moratorium on black bear hunting; securing support for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Fund; prohibiting the offshore mooring of boats by duck blinds during waterfowl season; securing a “cap” on commercial Menhaden catch with Virginia; being the first state to earmark hunting license fees for the Farmers & Hunters Feeding the Hungry Program; opening up 58,000 acres of Chesapeake lands for public/private hunting; and, defeating efforts to prohibit the use of leg-hold traps. Additionally, the Caucus was influential in the launching of a sportmen’s marketing initiative which promotes Maryland as a premier hunting and fishing destination - the first such marketing effort in the nation. Today, the Maryland Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus consists of 35 bipartisan members and is led by Senators Jack Bailey and Katie Fry Hester, and Delegates Wendell Beitzel and Ned Carey. Presently, Delegate Beitzel is also an active participant on the NASC Executive Council.

Policy Highlights

- Through efforts driven by the Maryland Caucus, numerous Sunday hunting bills have been passed and enacted, resulting in expanded hunting opportunities for the State’s sportsmen and sportswomen. Also enacted have been statutory protections for the Right to Hunt and Fish, and greatly enhance poaching penalties to protect our wildlife resources.
- Additionally, onerous firearms bills that would have severely undermined the 2nd Amendment rights of all Marylanders have been defeated, as have efforts to commercialize wild venison, among others.

Economic Impact and Conservation Funding

- Hunters and anglers support 10,707 jobs in Maryland, more than Lockheed Martin, one of the state’s largest employers (10,707 vs. 8,000).
- Through the “user pays - public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding, Maryland sportsmen and women generated $24.5 million for conservation last year alone.