



To: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
Room 251
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 778 – Sunday Hunting – Migratory Game Birds

Position: Support

Date: February 21, 2024

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

As the Senior Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), and as a lifelong Maryland resident and avid hunter, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 778 (HB 778) – Sunday Hunting – Migratory Game Birds. The passage of HB 778 will allow migratory game bird (waterfowl and dove) hunters the opportunity to hunt on Sundays. However, the approved hunting areas will continue to remain limited to private lands, public waters, and Wildlife Management Areas (WMS’s) that are owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Maryland has experienced success with the addition of Sunday hunting for other game species since 2003 when it was first authorized, to the present. However, the current framework for Sunday hunting has resulted in a confusing patchwork of various allowances that does not include any provisions for hunting waterfowl or other migratory gamebirds. HB 778 will provide the DNR with the ability to allow for waterfowl and migratory game bird hunting where biologically and sociologically supported, to provide increased opportunity for Maryland’s sportsmen and women.

Access is a major limiting factor hindering participation in hunting, and restrictions on Sunday hunting provide a temporal-access barrier to youth and others that work or attend school throughout the week and are

often involved in extra-curricular activities on Saturdays. Individuals and families continue to seek the ability to participate in safe and healthy recreation. Hunting not only provides residents with that chance, but it also offers a chance to harvest fresh and healthy meat for consumption and nourishment. CSF strongly supports measures that increase access and opportunity for sportsmen and women.¹

Sportsmen and women are the primary funders of state-level conservation efforts in the state and are thus an important constituency that provides benefits for all Marylanders. In 2023 alone, Maryland's sportsmen and women generated more than \$31.2 million dollars for conservation funding in Maryland through revenue derived from license sales and excise taxes on sporting-related goods in the unique "user pays – public benefits" structure known as the American System of Conservation Funding. This funding provides the lion's share of funding for the Maryland DNR and supports the agency's land acquisitions, wildlife and habitat management programs, and many other programs that benefit all citizens of the "Old-Line State".

Allowing Sunday migratory game bird hunting would also significantly benefit Maryland's economy, particularly in rural areas, by increasing economic output and job creation. An additional day to hunt would mean more dollars spent by hunters in restaurants, hotels, gas stations and stores throughout the state. Maryland's sportsmen and women are a significant economic force. In 2020, a study was conducted that revealed Maryland hunters contributed \$328,000,000 in retail sales, supported 4,100 jobs (\$157,000,000 in salaries and wages), paid \$29,000,000 in state and local taxes, and paid \$41,000,000 in federal taxes.² Additionally, increasing opportunities on Sundays will allow private landowners, farmers, and others to diversify their income sources by allowing an additional day of hunting on their land, thereby helping to provide a capital influx into rural economies that were hardest hit by the recent recession. Creating additional opportunities will also encourage out-of-state hunting-related tourism and further bolster rural economies throughout the state.

In closing, repealing laws that currently prohibit hunting on Sundays will increase participation, and likely license sales by extension, have a positive impact on the state's economy, and will strengthen the Old-Line State's deep outdoor heritage. In addition, this bill will provide more opportunities for friends and families to spend time afield, resulting in the strengthening of relationships, creating bonds and memories, as well as passing down traditions to the next generations. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 778.

Sincerely,



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¹ [Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation 2023 Issue Brief – Sunday Hunting Restrictions](#)

² Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation (12/2021) *Economic Impact of Hunting and Target Shooting – Technical Report – Within U.S. States and Congressional Districts*. Southwick Associates. [Microsoft Word - 2020 Economic Impact of Hunting and Shooting Technical Report.docx \(sportsmensalliance.org\)](#)