



AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 29, 2013

The Montgomery County Delegation
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Delegation Members: RE: MC 5-14 Montgomery County-Archery Hunting-Safety Zone

On behalf of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-AAC, please accept this letter in support for the proposed MC 5-14 which proposes to include Montgomery County with Carroll and Frederick Counties where the safety zone for archery hunting is 50 yards.

The AAC has been advocating for over 10 years that the State of Maryland and the County Government needs to be more proactive in controlling the growing deer population that negatively impacts our residents. The AAC is committed to fostering an environment where public health and safety of our residents is most important. The AAC also believes the growing deer population negatively impacts the health of residents due the increasing cases of lymes disease. The safety of residents is also negatively impacted by the growing number of deer vehicle collisions.

All of the deer management programs that are currently in place are not reducing the deer population in the County. Farmers are very frustrated by the lack of deer management on many of the parks located in the Agricultural Reserve. In 2013 farmers have experienced record crop yields on many of their farms. While 2013 has been one of the best growing seasons on record, some farmers have witnessed 100 percent crop losses on their farms adjacent to the parks where the deer congregate and then browse on farmers crops planted on adjacent farmland.

Over the years, County residents have become more and more frustrated by the negative impacts of deer as they destroy property from deer vehicle collisions as well as deer destroying most plants and flowers that residents purchase for the use and enjoyment on their property.

Reducing the deer herds in the County will require that hunters have all the tools necessary to safely harvest the deer. The County needs to consult with representatives from other jurisdictions to better understand the tools they have in place and how effective they are to reducing deer herds.

There is misconception by the general public that as development takes away the habitat for deer the outcome is that deer are congregating in down county parks close to where most of the County residents live and work. *According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources the birth of wildlife management in the early 1900s, has expanded the Maryland's deer population back into all habitats. State wildlife biologists have restocked the white-tailed deer to all available habitats in the state. White-tailed deer thrive in habitat that is composed of woods and openings, the expansion of housing developments into forests or onto farms provides excellent whitetail habitat. Streets and home sites created in a wooded area produce habitat preferred by white-tailed deer. Open farm fields become better deer habitat as new homeowners plant trees and shrubs on their bare home site. Deer populations have escalated in these suburban landscapes where exceptional habitat is available and hunting becomes limited.*

Montgomery County needs to recognize that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and their wildlife biologists are largely responsible for our growing deer population and all the deer impacts that jeopardize our resident's public health and safety. The residents of Montgomery County need the leadership from our State elected officials to reduce the deer population and achieve an environment that will benefit all residents.

Please support MC 5-14 which increases opportunities for bow hunting in down county areas of Montgomery County where the current 150 yard safety zone prohibits deer management. Thank you for considering the views of the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Weitzer", is written over a horizontal line.

David Weitzer, Chairman

Cc: Members of the AAC
Members of the APAB
Members of the MCFB