



Montgomery County Government

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Mr. Paul A. Peditto
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Heritage Service
580 Taylor Avenue, E-1
Annapolis, MD 21401
paul.peditto@maryland.gov

February 28, 2019

Dear Mr. Peditto:

We are writing this letter to express our continued concerns surrounding the growing deer population in Montgomery County and to reiterate some facts that you already know. It is our hope that you will take these concerns into consideration as the MD-DNR completes the recommendations of the MD-DNR 15-year Deer Management Plan. **Most importantly, we request that MD-DNR eliminate the 15 deer bag limit for archery hunters in the current year.** We understand from your February 18, 2019 e-mail to the members of the Montgomery County Delegation, that MD-DNR will propose options to address our concerns as part of the upcoming regulatory cycle to be effective in the fall of 2020.

As the elected leaders of Montgomery County, we are experiencing more residents contacting us and specifically asking what we are doing to address the growing deer population and how deer are negatively impacting these residents. Montgomery County is the highest urbanized County in the State with over one million people and hopefully the MD-DNR can differentiate our needs compared to other less urbanized rural counties in the state.

As the warden of the state, we understand that MD-DNR is responsible for implementing and enforcing deer policies and regulations for the whole state, but we also acknowledge that deer policies in place for rural counties are not conducive to Montgomery County where two-thirds of our county is in Urban Area in accordance with Montgomery County Code Section 57-4 that prohibits the discharge of guns. The gun prohibition limits the number of tools for us to effectively manage deer and this prohibition also helps explain why we have thousands of deer-vehicle collisions, the extensive decimation of plants and forested areas, as well as increased Lyme disease distribution.

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The remaining one-third of Montgomery County encompasses our Agricultural Reserve where we have over 500 farmers that continue to experience significant crop losses from deer, exceeding millions of dollars annually. In 2014, the total crop losses from deer reported from 40 farmers exceeded \$4.4 million.

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices/Resources/Files/deerdonation/Agricultural Damage 2015 deer report update to 2016.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices/Resources/Files/deerdonation/Agricultural%20Damage%202015%20deer%20report%20update%20to%202016.pdf)

In addition, it has been brought to our attention that MD-DNR makes it increasingly difficult for Park Police to conduct sharpshooting in our County Parks where we have the statistics of deer per square mile that far exceed an appropriate natural balance. This overpopulation is not healthy for the deer. We welcome you to consult with the Montgomery County residents that live adjacent to these County Parks so MD-DNR can gain a better appreciation of how these residents view deer as vermin.

Last year, Montgomery County residents and agricultural groups recommended several proposals to MD-DNR when the 2018-2019 Hunting Regulations were up for review and update. Unfortunately, these recommendations were not adopted and now the MD-DNR instructs us to wait until the fall of 2020 for the next MD-DNR regulatory update process to begin. We are encouraged by your statement: “we understand the concerns here and take those concerns seriously. As a result, we are currently planning to propose an option to reconfigure the deer bag limits for the upcoming regulation cycle. The options contemplated at this time include the reestablishment of a suburban archery zone for deer hunting, to include Montgomery county. We are in the middle of our two-year regulation cycle, so the changes would be effective for Fall 2020, allowing for the necessary time to review the data from the recently-concluded deer seasons and the upcoming deer management permit window.”

Montgomery County respectfully requests that the MD-DNR specifically incorporate the “2011-2012 Suburban Deer Archery Zone” as part of the 15-Year Deer Management Plan including the reinstatement of the unlimited bag limits. For the record, the Montgomery County Council and the County Executive oppose the current deer bag limits. We also request that MD-DNR explore the extension of the Deer Hunting Season to the end of February rather than the end of January. With the weather being so unpredictable and negatively impacting the total number of 77,382 deer harvested during the 2018-2019 hunting season, this additional month of hunting may help to increase the total number of deer harvested in the State.


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We are encouraged by your statements outlined in your February 18, 2019 e-mail, and we will closely monitor the actions of MD-DNR to see if you follow through on your word.

Sincerely,



Marc Elrich,
County Executive



Nancy Navarro,
President of the County Council