



House Bill 594

Prohibition on Sale of Wildlife – Local Venison Donation Programs - Application

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: February 10, 2021

From: Devin Neil

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 594. This bill would legalize “selling” lawfully harvested venison when contributed to county-supported food banks.

The bill would enable a local government, through a venison donation program, to lawfully compensate hunters for their venison donations to local nonprofits. Counties would also be able to compensate for the processing and distribution of the gifted venison. HB 594 equips local governments with a useful tool to extend resources in supporting nonprofit organizations, such as food banks serving individuals who are in need.

These programs provide a critical resource to foodbanks, many of which are experiencing food insecurity further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. In addition to fighting hunger, these programs help sensibly control deer populations, mitigating the damaging effects they can have on crops.

HB 594 provides a flexible option for local governments to feed residents suffering from hunger while managing deer populations. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 594 a **FAVORABLE** report.