



# QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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February 12, 2008

Ms. Maggie McIntosh  
Chair, Environmental Matters Committee  
Room 251, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1912

Dear Ms. McIntosh,

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to oppose HB 655 which would prohibit anyone under the age of 13 from receiving a hunting license. The QDMA is an international nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management and preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. The QDMA has nearly 50,000 members nationwide, including more than 2,500 of the nation's leading wildlife and forestry professionals. As such, QDMA is widely regarded as the most respected whitetail organization in the United States.

Hunters play an important role in Maryland's societal and economic well being. Hunters provide a free ecological service to society by managing deer and other wildlife populations and provide more than \$300 million annually to Maryland's economy. Unfortunately hunter numbers are declining as Maryland only recruits 89 hunters for every 100 it loses. This replacement ratio is above the national average and Maryland should be commended for its efforts, but the state is losing hunters. The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance considers Maryland a "somewhat restrictive" state with respect to age or hunter education requirements, and regulations that limit youth participation have an impact on a state's ability to attract new hunters. House Bill 655 would further restrict youth participation.

In contrast, most states with fewer barriers have higher hunter replacement ratios. Twelve of 16 (75%) states considered "least restrictive" with regard to age or hunter education requirements by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance had hunter replacement ratios above the national average. Four of these states recruited  $\geq 1$  hunter for each one they lost!

Safety is paramount to the future of hunting. Fortunately, research clearly shows hunting is safe. American Sports Data, Inc. conducted an extensive study in 2002 that examined more than 100 sports and activities. Twenty eight activities, including cheerleading and aerobics, had higher injury rates than hunting. Hunting is safe and supervised hunters are among the safest. National statistics show that supervised hunters compose only a fraction of the hunting-related firearms incidents that occur annually.

Maryland is losing hunters and sportsmen's dollars, and HB 655 will exacerbate this situation. I urge you to oppose HB 655. Thank you for consideration of this important matter and for your commitment to Maryland's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams  
Director of Education & Outreach / Wildlife Biologist

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*The QDMA is dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management  
and the preservation of the deer-hunting heritage.*

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