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**Committee: Ways and Means**

**Testimony on: HB 7 – “Income Tax Credit – Venison Donation Expenses - Montgomery County Deer Donation Program”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: January 21, 2021**

The bill reinstates a tax credit for venison donation by Montgomery County hunters who participate in the Montgomery County Deer Donation Program. The tax credit provides for a maximum of \$200, for up to four deer, which covers the value of the deer and reparation. Sierra Club is in support of this bill.

This bill is especially important now that there are so many communities which are food insecure during the COVID pandemic. It will encourage those hunting antlerless deer as well as helping the food banks which will welcome this food for their many clients. Food banks across the state are running out of food because there are so many new clients. High protein donations are especially needed rather than the canned and boxed items which are now rationed. There are existing regulated operations for the preparation of the meat which will be provided to the soup kitchens such as Manna in Montgomery County.

Humane control of deer also supports public health by decreasing the incidence of Lyme Disease, car accidents involving deer, and the destruction of forests, native plants, crops, landscaping, and gardens by deer overpopulation.

In summary, we recommend that the Committee favorably report this legislation.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.