



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB 769 – Income Tax Credit for Venison Donation

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to announce my support for Senator Hester's Senate Bill 769. Senate Bill 769 modestly alters the existing income tax credit for venison donation to adjust for the rising cost of venison processing. This opportunity could encourage more individuals to donate processed deer meat to help meet the increased demand for food security as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Maryland, the cost of venison processing has increased, while the \$50 tax credit for qualified expenses of hunting, processing, and donating deer meat has remained unchanged. Senate Bill 769 would increase this tax credit to \$75, which would increase the total annual credit limit for individuals to \$600 and expand the program until 2028. This bill incentivizes supporting local and sustainable opportunities for families facing food insecurity while maintaining quality assurances that the processed product is safe for consumption.

Despite these challenging times and economic insecurity, our neighbors should not have to worry about where their next meal will come from. Recently, my administration announced a new pilot program to provide venison to local food banks. The program operates in partnership with the Howard Soil Conservation District and Howard County Economic Development Authority. I was pleased to partner with Senator Hester to launch this program which will help ensure the Howard County Food Bank and Roving Radish can continue to sustain families facing food insecurity. Coupled with these efforts, we launched online tools for families to locate food donations sites, local farms and created a partnership to expand a weekly meal program for students and families in Western Howard County.

Senator Hester's bill would give struggling families more food options while also supporting our state's deer hunters. I appreciate your support and partnership as we work to expand access to resources and meet the needs of families throughout this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive