

HOUSE BILL 1511

M1

5lr3537
CF SB 736

By: **Delegates Ruth, Allen, Nawrocki, Otto, and Ziegler**

Introduced and read first time: February 17, 2025

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Wildlife Damage Prevention and Reimbursement Fund –**
3 **Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Wildlife Damage Prevention and Reimbursement
5 Fund to reimburse a person for certain damage caused by deer, geese, and other
6 wildlife; and generally relating to damage caused by deer, geese, and other wildlife.

7 BY adding to

8 Article – Natural Resources

9 Section 10–423.2

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
13 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article – Natural Resources**

15 **10–423.2.**

16 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “FUND” MEANS THE WILDLIFE DAMAGE PREVENTION**
17 **AND REIMBURSEMENT FUND.**

18 **(B) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT IT IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**
19 **TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO REIMBURSE A PERSON WHO HAS SUSTAINED DAMAGE TO**
20 **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AS A RESULT OF DEER, GEESE, AND OTHER WILDLIFE.**

21 **(C) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO DAMAGE CAUSED BY A**
22 **DOMESTICATED ANIMAL OR A BLACK BEAR.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(D) (1) THERE IS A WILDLIFE DAMAGE PREVENTION AND REIMBURSEMENT FUND IN THE DEPARTMENT.

(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO REIMBURSE A PERSON FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEER, GEESE, AND OTHER WILDLIFE TO CROPS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

(3) THE SECRETARY SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

(4) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

(I) PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF A CONSERVATION DEER STAMP OR DECAL THAT MAY BE PURCHASED AT A COST OF \$5 FOR EACH STAMP OR DECAL;

(II) GIFTS, GRANTS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE THAT ARE DESIGNATED FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUND; AND

(III) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE FUND.

(5) THE FUND IS A CONTINUING, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

(6) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY, AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

(E) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ACCEPT REQUESTS FOR GRANTS FROM THE FUND FOR PROJECTS THAT SEEK TO PREVENT DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEER, GEESE, OR OTHER WILDLIFE.

(2) IN DETERMINING PROJECTS THAT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANTS, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSIDER PROJECTS THAT:

(I) REDUCE THE AVAILABILITY OF ATTRACTANTS TO DEER, GEESE, OR OTHER WILDLIFE IN COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES;

(II) HAVE LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT OR A DETAILED PLAN TO BUILD LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT;

1 (III) ARE COST-EFFECTIVE INVESTMENTS THAT HAVE THE
2 POTENTIAL TO CONTINUE TO BE EFFECTIVE BEYOND THE TIME FRAME FOR THE
3 GRANT FUNDING; OR

4 (IV) INCLUDE MATCHING FUNDS OR AN IN-KIND MATCH.

5 (3) THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT AWARD A GRANT FOR:

6 (I) STAND-ALONE RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND
7 ANALYSIS; OR

8 (II) THE DIRECT GENERATION OF REVENUE OR PROFIT.

9 (4) ENTITIES ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION
10 INCLUDE:

11 (I) LOCAL GOVERNMENTS;

12 (II) PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENTS;

13 (III) LANDOWNERS;

14 (IV) FARMERS;

15 (V) BUSINESSES;

16 (VI) TRIBES;

17 (VII) INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

18 (VIII) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

19 (5) GRANT FUNDING UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE CAPPED AT
20 AN AMOUNT THAT LEAVES AT LEAST 10% OF THE TOTAL ANNUAL APPROPRIATION
21 UNDER SUBSECTION (H) OF THIS SECTION AVAILABLE FOR DAMAGE
22 REIMBURSEMENT UNDER SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION.

23 (F) (1) THE DEPARTMENT MAY REIMBURSE A PERSON FROM THE FUND
24 FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEER, GEESE, AND OTHER WILDLIFE TO THE PERSON'S
25 CROPS OR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

26 (2) A PERSON IS ELIGIBLE TO BE REIMBURSED FROM THE FUND FOR
27 DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEER, GEESE, OR OTHER WILDLIFE IF:

1 **(I) THE PERSON HAS FOLLOWED ALL RELEVANT WILDLIFE**
2 **DAMAGE PREVENTIVE MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT;**

3 **(II) THE DAMAGE AMOUNT IS DETERMINED BY AN EXTENSION**
4 **AGENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE;**
5 **AND**

6 **(III) THE DEPARTMENT HAS VERIFIED THAT THE DAMAGE WAS**
7 **CAUSED BY DEER, GEESE, OR OTHER WILDLIFE.**

8 **(3) SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FUNDING, A PERSON MAY BE**
9 **REIMBURSED FROM THE FUND FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEER, GEESE, OR OTHER**
10 **WILDLIFE IN AN AMOUNT NOT LESS THAN \$200 AND NOT MORE THAN \$5,000 PER**
11 **YEAR.**

12 **(G) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS**
13 **SECTION.**

14 **(H) FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR, THE GOVERNOR MAY INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL**
15 **BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF AT LEAST \$50,000 TO THE FUND.**

16 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
17 October 1, 2025.