



May 2015

President's Letter

Jane Seigler

As the voice of all of Maryland's equestrian community and horse industry, the Maryland Horse Council has closed the book on another legislative session in Annapolis. Often exciting and always exhausting, this legislative session was a particularly rewarding one for MHC. Aided by the outstanding leadership and guidance of our lobbyist Frank Boston and his superb Annapolis team, we were successful in virtually all our legislative initiatives.

During the course of the three-month session, MHC closely monitored 42 bills and resolutions that could have an effect on horse people, their farms, businesses and even their pets. We testified at numerous hearings, wrote and submitted written testimony on several bills, and took formal positions without testimony on many others. We traveled to Annapolis over and over again to meet with key legislators and county delegations. Huge thanks are owed to the dedicated MHC members who disrupted their daily lives and schedules to come to Annapolis whenever called upon, and who helped organize our grass roots efforts. Special thanks to the many of you who made phone calls, wrote emails and otherwise lobbied your representatives to support our causes. Your persistent and effective efforts did not go unnoticed in the halls of the Legislature, as we were often greeted by legislators with: "I know, I know - I've heard from your people!"

Here are some of the things we worked on:

We worked closely with the ASPCA and other stakeholders in crafting amendments to a bill that would authorize a court to order a defendant convicted of animal cruelty, as a condition of sentencing, to pay, in addition to any other fines and costs, all reasonable costs incurred in removing, housing, treating, or euthanizing an animal confiscated from the defendant, and establishing other procedural requirements (SB393/HB362). As of this writing, differences between the House and Senate versions, both of which passed both chambers, are under review by an appointed Conference Committee. The House bill contains caps on the amount a defendant can be required to pay, and sets requirements for the notice that must be given to a person when his animals are confiscated; the Senate version did not include these elements.

As in recent years, a big part of our efforts was devoted to stopping the advance of Sunday hunting. Prior to 2002, no hunting on Sundays was the law of the land throughout the state of Maryland, meaning that Sundays were preserved as a day of "quiet enjoyment" of the outdoors for others: horseback riders, hikers, birdwatchers, etc. Beginning in 2002, a number of attempts were made in the Legislature to open Sundays to hunting on a statewide basis. When these statewide bills were unsuccessful, a new tactic

was developed by Sunday hunting proponents: chipping away at the no-Sundays rule, one county at a time. This tactic has proved successful because these bills were often introduced by the entire county delegation, and as such were treated as "courtesy bills" - receiving favorable consideration as a matter of course.

MHC has begun to fight back in earnest against this "county courtesy" tactic, and we have had some successes. Last year we were successful in Anne Arundel (although we were unsuccessful in blocking a bill that allowed expansion in Allegany, Frederick, Garrett and Washington Counties). This year, we successfully blocked expanded Sunday hunting in

Maryland Horse Council Meeting

Quarterly Meeting on May 12th
Montgomery County Agricultural
History Farm Park

18410 Muncaster Rd | Derwood, MD

6pm: Reception
7pm: Meeting
all are welcomed!

Highlights for Meeting:
MHC Officers election
New web site demonstration
Legislative report
Update on new developments in
manure management

For more information, or to join MHC,
please visit
www.mdhorsecouncil.org.

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Baltimore (**HB18/SB378**), Calvert and Dorchester (**HB285/SB117**), Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Harford, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties (**HB411**), Harford (**HB655**), as well as a statewide bill (**HB414**). We also worked successfully with Senate leadership in securing the repeal of a bill passed last year that added three months, including Sundays, to the hunting season in Charles and St. Mary's Counties (**SB68**).

Our most successful defense against these "county courtesy" bills is vigilance at the county level itself. When county officials considering legislative initiatives hear from their constituents that a proposal is unpopular, that will often be the end of it.

If you would be willing to monitor the agenda of your County Council, Commission or other governing body, to alert your fellow equestrians about measures that might affect them, please let us know! It will only take a few minutes of your time to check your county's website periodically and it could make a big difference. If you can help, please contact admin@mdhorsecouncil.org.

The Department of Natural Resources has long taken the position that recreational hunting, including Sundays, is their most effective tool in controlling the burgeoning white-tail deer population. However, as anyone who owns a farm or garden can attest, the deer population continues to grow exponentially in most areas of the state, causing huge losses to crops, landscapes and forests, as well as increasing incidence of Lyme disease and vehicle collisions.

This year, MHC in collaboration with the Maryland Farm Bureau,

introduced a bill (**SB748**) that proposed a more effective solution, allowing the sale of venison from deer taken under crop damage permits issued to farmers who can demonstrate deer damage to their crops. We crafted this bill as a pilot program, and because it represents a unique approach (Maryland would be the first state to allow the commercial sale of wild venison, although other states are considering it), we did not expect passage this year. Nevertheless, we are pleased with the discussion that the bill provoked, and will take these new ideas and suggestions into account as we work on a new version to be introduced next year. Consistent with our support of farmers in their fight against deer damage, we also supported a bill that would allow the use of rifles under crop damage permits in Frederick County (**SB844**). The bill passed.

We submitted written testimony expressing concerns about a bill (HB 151) that would prohibit a person from buying, selling, transporting, or offering or receiving for sale or transportation any equine or equine carcass or the meat of any equine if the person knows or reasonably should know that the equine, carcass or meat will be used for human consumption. MHC strongly supports education efforts for the care and welfare of horses, and supports the development of an infrastructure for humane end-of-life options for horses. However, we were not convinced that this bill, as written, was the best solution at the present time for the problem of unwanted horses and the abuse and neglect they may suffer, especially considering that, as the premise of the bill was based on knowledge and intent at the time of a transaction, it would seem that enforcement of its provisions would be difficult, if not impossible. The bill did not pass.

Here are some other bills that we took positions on:

HB153 - Would prohibit leaving a dog restrained and unattended for longer than 15 minutes when a hazardous weather warning is in effect or for longer than 1 hour when temperature is below 33 degrees or above 99 degrees. We opposed this and other similar bills (HB956; SB26) because they did not take into account their application to pets who live on farms, or kennel foxhounds. These bills did not pass.

HB536/SB345 - Would give tax benefit to purchase of livestock manure loading and hauling equipment. Supported; did not pass.

HB928 - Would have repealed the sales tax exemption for the purchase of agricultural inputs. Opposed; did not pass.

HB946 - Would make all noncompete and conflict of interest provisions in employment contracts null and void. Opposed; did not pass.

HJ5/SJ5 - Resolution urging MD Congressional Delegation to work with Congress and Department of Interior to extend goose and duck hunting season through February. Opposed; did not pass.

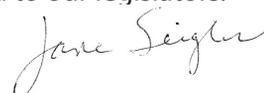
If you have any questions about any of these bills, please let us know. You can get full information about any of them, including their full texts, any amendments, which legislators voted for/against, etc. by going to mgaleg.maryland.gov and typing in the bill number in the "Find legislation by number" box at the top of the home page. We have been updating our website; copies of any written testimony submitted by MHC this session will be posted to our Legislative page soon.

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Finally, MHC, in conjunction with the Maryland Horse Industry Board hosted our very first Maryland Horse Industry Day in Annapolis on March 23, 2015. Numerous promotional events, including videotaped interviews with some of Maryland's horse industry leaders that appeared on centermaryland.com, newspaper coverage, MHC visits to some county delegations,

etc. preceded a terrific happy hour for legislators at the Calvert House in Annapolis. Although it was very late in the session and the legislators' schedules were tight, we had a great turnout of Maryland Senators, Delegates, Cabinet Secretaries and other Hogan Administration officials and horse industry leaders from across the entire spectrum of our diverse

industry - all coming together to make the point that Maryland's horse industry is wide, deep and strong. Next year we are looking forward to an even bigger and better event, and we hope you can join us in making our voice heard to our legislators!



Save the Dates! Something for Everyone!

Visit www.mdhorsecouncil.org for RSVP details for all events!

Farm Stewardship Meeting: Saturday, May 9th

3pm – 5:30pm at Hilltop Farm in Colora, MD

Free to attend!

Meet to discuss the Farm Stewardship Certification Assessment Program (FSCAP) and Maryland horse farms' participation.

Day at the Races: Sunday, May 31st

11:30am – 4pm at Pimlico Race Track in Baltimore, MD

Tickets starting at \$50 per person. Group ticket discounts available.

Ticket includes: entrance ticket, champagne brunch, program, tours of the training barn, tours of the paddock and winners circle, 'Handicapping 101' lesson, expert talks with a jockey, trainer and vet, plus so much more!

Business Network Meeting: Tuesday, June 2nd

11am – 2pm at Baltimore Ag Center in Cockeysville, MD

Free to attend! Lunch included! Must be a current Business, Farm or Charity & Foundation member.

Meet to discuss how to get your great product developed, manufactured and distributed!



One common bond ... the Horse. One common voice ... Maryland Horse Council.

Maryland Horse Council Membership Form

Membership Type: *(check your membership type/amount)*

	Annual	3-Year	5-Year	Lifetime	Total
ASSOCIATION:	_____ \$100	_____ \$300	_____ \$500	_____ \$1,000	_____ \$
BUSINESS:	_____ \$100	_____ \$285	_____ \$475	_____ \$1,000	_____ \$
FARM:	_____ \$75	_____ \$215	_____ \$355	_____ \$750	_____ \$
CHARITY & FOUNDATION:	_____ \$75	_____ \$215	_____ \$355	_____ \$750	_____ \$
INDIVIDUAL:	_____ \$40	_____ \$105	_____ \$175	_____ \$400	_____ \$
YOUTH:	_____ \$5	<i>Date of Birth:</i> _____			_____ \$

Donations: *(if you would like to make a donation to one of our funds, please write in amount(s) below)*

Political Action Committee:	_____ \$	_____	_____	_____	_____ \$
Maryland Fund for Horses:	_____ \$	_____	_____	_____	_____ \$
MHC General Fund:	_____ \$	_____	_____	_____	_____ \$

TOTAL Amount *(Dues plus Donations):* _____ \$**MEMBER INFORMATION:** *(please fill in completely)*

Assn./Bus./Farm/Charity or Foundation: _____

Contact or Individual's Name: _____

Address: _____ County: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell: _____ Home: _____ Work: _____

Email(s): _____

Website: _____

 Check if you **DO NOT** want your membership to automatically renew each year. Renewals take place each July.**PAYMENT:** *Can be paid Online, by Mail, or by Phone***CREDIT CARD info:** *(NOTE: If credit card billing address differs from the address above, please complete below)*CC # *(please print clearly)* _____

Exp. Date _____

Security Code _____

Name of card holder as it appears on card *(please print)* _____

Signature _____

Billing Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Pay ON-LINE at:**MAIL Payments to:****Pay by PHONE:**www.mdhorsecouncil.org/join.htm

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