



May 2016

President's Letter

Jane Seigler

Once again, MHC rocked the staid and storied halls of Annapolis by achieving what is generally believed to be the unachievable—defeating a county delegation sponsored “county courtesy” bill. This time it was House Bill 203, which would have authorized the Department of Natural Resources to allow Sunday hunting for all game mammals and game birds on every Sunday of the respective hunting seasons in Caroline County. As late as the Friday before the end of the session, we weren’t sure we had the votes. But intense lobbying over the weekend produced results! In the evening hours on Monday, the very last day of the 2016 session, the Senate Committee on Education, Health and Environmental Affairs killed the bill by a vote of 7-3. Senators Conway (Baltimore City), Pinsky (Prince Georges), Nathan-Pulliam (Baltimore City and County), Kagan (Montgomery), Rosa-pepe (Prince Georges and Anne Arundel), Young (Frederick) and Zucker (Montgomery) voted with us. Senators Bates (Carroll and Howard), Salling (Baltimore County) and Waugh (Calvert and St. Mary’s) were against us, and Senator Simonaire (Anne Arundel) abstained.

This achievement was possible through the outstanding coordinated efforts of our profes-

sional lobbyist, Frank Boston; our dedicated, all volunteer, Legislative Committee; and our hugely responsive and effective grassroots “team”—the MHC members from Caroline County who took the time to come to Annapolis and testify against the bill (thanks and a big shout out to Christy Clagett, our grassroots “whip” who worked the phones to organize the panel from Caroline County), and to the MHC members from all over the state who responded to our e-blasts and called and emailed their representatives to voice their opposition to the bill.

As mentioned, these county sponsored bills are normally very hard to defeat because the legislators generally want to give deference to an individual county’s initiatives, with the hope of receiving reciprocal consideration when their own county has a bill. Our most successful defense against these “county courtesy” bills is vigilance at the county level itself. When county officials are considering legislative initiatives to send to Annapolis and they 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! We’ll take care of the rest. 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.

Jane Seigler

Maryland Horse Council Meeting

May 10th, 2016

The Show Place Arena
@ Prince George’s Equestrian Center
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

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

Highlights for Meeting:

- Report on results of MHC Director-at-Large elections
- Report on legislative session and plans for future legislative initiatives
- Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) presentation for members

Visit www.mdhorsecouncil.org for RSVP details!

Legislative Update

This year, however, MHC was not just reactive, we were also proactive on the Sunday hunting issue. In the summer of 2015, MHC convened a group of landowners, hunters, and outdoor recreation users to create a uniform Sunday hunting program during the deer firearms season without closing off land to other users for whole weekends. The result was Senate Bill 1061, introduced by Senator Joan Carter Conway, Chair of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

SB 1061 would allow DNR to authorize Sunday hunting during the deer firearms season in all Maryland counties until 10:30 am but not after. It would replace all the existing and widely varying Sunday deer hunting firearms laws and accomplish the following:

1. Hunters would get more time in the field. Today we have a combined 74 Sundays when the county laws are aggregated. This proposal would allow up to 207 Sunday mornings aggregated across counties.

2. Hunters could be in the field when they want to be. The average deer hunter stays out for a half day. This bill would require that shooting end at 10:30, allowing hunters to track, field dress, and remove deer after that time. Few hunters choose to hunt on Sunday afternoons, due either to the logistics of deer processing on Sunday evenings, or the lure of Sunday football.

3. Riders and other outdoor recreation users would have a time in every county each weekend when they know that the woods and countryside are safe. Clubs, groups, and individuals in counties where all-weekend hunting passed in recent years will have some weekend access restored and be able to resume their activities.

SB 1061 did not move forward in the legislature this year, but MHC plans to continue to work diligently throughout this year to secure a solution to the Sunday hunting issue that is fair

and equitable for all users of the outdoors in hunting season.

The fact that HB 203 was the only serious attempt to expand Sunday hunting in the legislature this year is a testament to the effectiveness of MHC's advocacy on this issue in the last few years. (Last year we fought and defeated 7 Sunday hunting bills.) MHC is continuing on its trajectory of being an increasingly seasoned, respected and effective advocacy force throughout the state. Our Legislative Committee has broadened into quite a deep bench, bringing a variety of expertise to bear on legislative proposals.

For example, when the legislature was considering legislation (SB614/HB1462) regarding veterinarians' use of compounded ("made to order") medications, our team, including an equine vet and an attorney with experience in Food and Drug law, pointed out inconsistencies and deficiencies within the language of the proposed bill, as well as potential conflicts with Federal law. The bill was amended to address our concerns, and passed.

Another bill, SB 722, would have increased penalties for animal cruelty and neglect, something we of course support. But a second section buried in the bill would have made veterinarians criminally liable for failure to report when abuse or neglect is suspected. We saw a number of problems with both the idea and enforcement of that provision. We pointed out our concerns to the Senate Committee on Judicial Proceedings, and the Committee voted against the bill.

Our team members with substantial background in racing testified against HB704, which would have prohibited Off Track Betting at the State Fairgrounds in Timonium (it failed) and in support of the legislation (SB1116/HB815) that would allow Arabian Horse Racing at Fair Hill (it passed).

We also worked closely with Delegate Howard of Anne Arundel County who wants to establish a Maryland Equestrian Day. We gave him suggestions for tweaks to the bill to improve its branding and calendar scheduling. Unfortunately, it did not come out of Committee this year.

All told, during the course of the three month session, MHC closely monitored about 40 bills that could have an effect on horse people, their farms, businesses and even their pets. At our weekly conference call throughout the session, we evaluated the new bills that had been introduced during the preceding week that might impact us, discussed and arrived at our position, and determined our lobbying strategy. We testified at a number of hearings, wrote and submitted written testimony on a number of other 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. Our all volunteer army (assisted greatly by our professional lobbyist, Frank Boston and his staff) was a force to be reckoned with, as we weighed in on bills ranging from Soil Conservation and Program Open Space funding, to tax credits for preservation easements, to workplace rules, to deer poaching, and more, including the specific bills discussed in more detail above. A complete summary of all the bills we followed and what action we took on them can be found here: <http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org/legislative-blog>. 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 <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov> and typing in the bill number in the "Find legislation by number" box at the top of the home page.

Maryland Horse Industry Day Report

Finally, MHC, in conjunction with the Maryland Horse Industry Board and other horse industry partners hosted the Maryland Horse Industry Day in Annapolis on February 23, 2016. Numerous promotional events, including videotaped interviews with some of Maryland's horse industry leaders that appeared on <http://centermaryland.com>, newspaper coverage, our own MHC Youth Correspondent's blog post, and other forms of outreach achieved

broad marketing of the event. The day included a kick-off and issue briefing, press conference, and constituent meetings with over 25 legislators. Hundreds of Marylanders from around the state came to the State's Capitol to advocate for the industry. All of that preceded a terrific happy hour for legislators at the Calvert House in Annapolis. 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!

Upcoming Events

May

14th: Farm Stewardship Meeting at Wyndham Oaks Farm in Boyds

15th – 21st: Maryland Responsible Horse Ownership Week

September

17th: 10th Annual BBQ at Waredaca Farm in Laytonsville

June

5th: Day at the Races at Pimlico Racecourse in Baltimore

November

TBD: Evening at the Races at Rosecroft Raceway in Fort Washington

15th: Annual Meeting at the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis

August

16th: Quarterly Meeting (location TBD)



Stay Connected!

With so much going on, the Maryland Horse Council tries to keep everyone informed through our various online outlets. Please be sure to visit us online and bookmark these pages so you can stay up to date with everything! Visit www.mdhorsecouncil.org for details on how to join today! Follow Us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MarylandHorseCouncil> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/MDHorseCouncil>

Maryland Horse Council membership is open to all associations, farms, businesses and individuals. To join, please visit www.mdhorsecouncil.org, contact admin@mdhorsecouncil.org, or call 301.502.8929. The Maryland Horse Council is sponsored by B & D Builders, The Equiry and Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit.



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: _____

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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

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_____ 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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