

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 447 (Delegate Grammer)
Rules and Executive Nominations

Natural Resources - Right to Hunt, Fish, and Harvest Wildlife

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment that establishes under the Maryland Declaration of Rights a specified right of every person to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife, including the right to use traditional methods to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife, subject to regulations and restrictions under laws that the General Assembly enacts. Contingent on passage and ratification of the constitutional amendment, the bill makes related modifications and additions to existing General Assembly intent in statute that residents have a right to hunt and a right to fish, subject to regulations and restrictions under laws that the General Assembly enacts.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The proposed constitutional amendment establishes under the Maryland Declaration of Rights that every person must have the right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife, including the right to use traditional methods to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife, subject to regulations and restrictions under laws that the General Assembly enacts, to (1) promote wildlife conservation and management and (2) preserve the future of hunting and fishing. These rights may not be construed to limit the application of any provision of law relating to trespass or property rights.

Contingent on passage of the constitutional amendment and its ratification by the voters of the State, the bill modifies and adds to existing General Assembly intent expressed in

statute – under Title 4 (Fish and Fisheries) and Title 10 (Wildlife) of the Natural Resources Article – that residents of the State have a right to hunt and a right to fish, subject to regulations and restrictions under laws that the General Assembly enacts. The bill modifies that intent to include that residents of the State have the right to use traditional methods to hunt and fish. The bill also adds General Assembly intent that (1) the right to hunt and the right to fish must be forever preserved for the public good and (2) hunting and fishing must be preferred means of managing and controlling wildlife in the State.

Current Law: Chapters 295 and 296 of 2021 established, under Titles 4 and 10 of the Natural Resources Article, findings and intent of the General Assembly regarding hunting and fishing. Specifically, under Chapters 295 and 296, the General Assembly finds that:

- hunting and fishing are valued parts of the State’s cultural and social heritage that provide unique recreational benefits to residents of the State; and
- hunting and fishing (1) play an important part in the State’s economy by contributing to tax revenues and employment and (2) support the conservation, preservation, and management of the State’s fisheries and wildlife, natural areas, and water and related resources (in the case of hunting, through the receipt of federal funds).

Chapters 295 and 296 establish the intent of the General Assembly that residents of the State have a right to hunt and a right to fish, subject to regulations and restrictions under laws that the General Assembly enacts.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Office of the Attorney General; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Natural Resources; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 12, 2026
caw/lgc

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510