



VIRGINIA HORSE COUNCIL

VIRGINIA HORSE COUNCIL POSITION PAPER SUNDAY HUNTING

Position: The Virginia Horse Council opposes expanding any form of hunting with a gun, firearm or weapon to Sundays which would adversely impact the safe use of rural lands for agriculture activities including riding and pasturing our horses.

Background:

- The current law which prohibits hunting on Sunday, provides an opportunity for the majority of the Commonwealth's citizens, including horse owners, recreational riders and trail riders to enjoy Virginia's scenic trails and outdoors, without fear of being struck by a hunter's bullet or having their horse mistaken for a large game animal.
- The VHC is not opposed to hunting or hunters, but wishes to preserve one day a week for the majority of the citizens who wish to ride, hike, and bike or otherwise enjoy the outdoors.
- 13 of 27 foxhunts ride on Sundays during deer season in Virginia and for some it may mean closing their hunt.
- Sunday Hunting could result in a substantial increase in use on the State Parks, National Battlefields and regional parks and they may not be adequately prepared, either physically or financially for increases in users.
- Thousands of dollars raised annually by community charity rides will be lost if Sunday Hunting is approved. This is a sample of the types of organizations currently benefiting from charity rides: community fire departments, Loudoun Therapeutic Riding Horses for Heroes program, Marion DuPont Scott Equine Medical Center, Good Samaritan Fund, St. Jude's, Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Studies, Ride with Pride, Inc., Equine Rescue groups and Fauquier SPCA as well as many other organizations.

Facts from The Economic Impact of the Horse Industry in Virginia, conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Studies, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia, March 8, 2011:

- Equines are the 9th largest agricultural commodity in Virginia (\$102,400,000 in cash receipts).
- Virginia ranks 12th in the nation for numbers of horses.
- It is estimated that there are over 215,000 equines in VA and over 41,000 equine operations.
- The most popular category of horse use in Virginia is recreational riding, including trail riding on public and private lands.

Action Requested: The Virginia Horse Council opposes any form of Sunday hunting at any time on that day and feels that the expansion of hunting to this day poses an extreme threat to the safety of Virginia equine owners, recreational riders and their horse as well as to the many other Virginia residents who use our trails and travel through our Virginia countryside on Sundays.

The Virginia Horse Council is a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to "Represent Virginia's Diversified Equine Industry with a Unified Voice." Our membership includes owners of equine breeding operations, event and competition riders and owners, trail and pleasure riders, horse show competitors, therapeutic riding programs as well as numerous individual equine organizations across the state. Positions on state issues are reached after thorough study in consultation with VHC members during the State Policy Development Process. The 2012 Policy on State Issues was approved by the Board of Directors on January 25, 2012.

Virginia Horse Council

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