



**The Maryland House of Delegates
Health and Government Operations Committee**

**HB0192: Department of General Services – Energy-Conserving Standards
(Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2020)**

Position: Support

An estimated 1 billion birds die in collisions with glass in North America every year. Data from collision monitoring programs indicates several concerning factors including that this affects nearly every species of bird, and notably in Maryland species identified by our state's Wildlife Action Plan as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Many groups throughout our state with a specific interest in conserving birds for a variety of economic, ecological, and conservation reasons have partnered together, in a joint effort of our state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) under the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP), to ensure a future with one of our most vital natural resources. The birds that are lost to what amounts to a preventable situation include resident, migratory, game, forest-dwelling, and coastal-dwelling birds. These birds are pollinators, insectivores, seed dispersers, scavengers, and predators and many, if not all, of our natural systems require their presence to maintain a healthy balance in nature.

When a building is state-owned, operated, or substantially funded it makes sense that it should be the best it can be to conserve energy, be high-performance, and still appeal to a modern aesthetic if desired. In one study, we found that a ten story building could save on heating and cooling costs in the amount of nearly 1.5 million dollars over just a ten year period. We have learned that when choices are made in the design phase they can be minimal or cost-neutral and when they are not considered, the inefficiencies translate to high operational costs and waste over what will likely be a fifty year lifecycle for that building.

Notably, the Javits Center in New York offers proof that an all-glass building can be energy-efficient and bird-safe having achieved impressive results in their most recent remodel. This building now conserves a considerable amount of energy, prevents bird strikes, and proves that this in no way affects natural lighting or cuts down on any visual benefit of utilizing glass.

The effort toward sustainability, in achieving the best balance between growth and conserving resources, is something that concerns every citizen. The unintended consequence of using glass without the benefits of current technology results in a building that by definition is not sustainable.

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Increased energy waste and operational costs coupled with an incredibly unpleasant and regular occurrence of birds crashing into windows is something that can and should be avoided. Business owners and operations managers have regularly reported concerns with customer complaints, pedestrian avoidance, interference in the work day, as well as the need to clean up and dispose of deceased birds and an uncertainty of what to do with injured birds. Reports of increased mammal scat, scavenger and predator activity, including the increased presence of rats, are associated with artificially high levels of available food source in the form of regularly dead and dying birds at a fixed location. Businesses regularly report frustration with these inefficiencies in heating, cooling, and bird collisions, especially because they could have reasonably been avoided. While we attempt to assist in remediation efforts, we know that the scale of this growing problem is best addressed in the sustainable features chosen in the design phase of a building project.

Ensuring LEED Credit 55 is utilized wherever practicable can prevent many of the known issues, saving not only birds, but bats, beneficial insects, and other wildlife while substantially conserving energy, preventing waste, and cutting down on pollution.

Thank you for your consideration. We respectfully request your support of this worthwhile effort toward a sustainable future.