



HB43 Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2022
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
March 22, 2022

www.lightsoutbaltimore.org

Lights Out Baltimore is a volunteer project of the Baltimore Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society. We ask you to support HB43, the Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2022, sponsored by Del. Hill. This bill will require state buildings to adopt sustainable building standards that ensure energy efficient practices, cost-saving installations, and ultimately reduce glass collisions that kill up to one billion federally protected migratory birds per year. I am asking you to support this bill, because these same building standards have already been legislated in many other states and cities and proven to be effective with lasting benefits to communities, the environment, and wildlife.

The dozens of volunteers to make up Lights Out Baltimore have seen first-hand the negative impact that poorly designed buildings have on the local community. Birds found dead or injured from building collisions in downtown Baltimore inspired the formation 15 years ago of Lights Out Baltimore (LOB), which rescues birds that have suffered glass collisions during spring and fall migration (April/May and September/October). Many local businesses, too—disheartened by finding dead or injured birds on their premises—have started monitoring their own buildings and installing retrofits that provide a safe environment for migratory birds. As LOB works with the community, there is a need for state support in ensuring surrounding environment next to bird habitats that is, in fact, safe for birds. HB43 will do exactly that—mandate the incorporation of truly sustainable design that considers both light-efficient practices and bird-safe elements to reduce glass collisions.

Since 2008, LOB has found more than 5,500 dead birds in downtown Baltimore, rescued 1,800+ birds and bats (which are also susceptible to glass collisions and injury), and reported 107 species, 66 which are listed on the Department of Natural Resources Maryland Species of Greatest Conservation Need. One such rescued bird—found after a collision with a pane of ground-level glass at 7 St. Paul Street—was a Yellow Rail, last documented in Baltimore City in 1893. On average, 450 birds are found dead in downtown Baltimore annually during monitoring of 20 buildings during just four months of the year. Can you imagine how high the average number is across the entire state year-round? With an increase of glass features in development, abundance of exposed lighting fixtures, the annual number of bird mortality will see a significant and alarming increase.

Voting in favor of this bill is an example of Maryland's leadership in serving the community, conserving energy, saving energy costs, and conserving native wildlife. A 2010 US Fish & Wildlife Service survey showed that bird enjoyment activities are taken up by 934,000 Marylanders—and 150,000 non-residents who visit the state—spurring an enormous level of economic activity. Lights Out Baltimore urges you to support this important bill to ensure a vital future for migratory birds and the communities that enjoy them.