



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 62 – Land Use – Public Service Companies –
Pollinator-Friendly Vegetation Management**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB62 on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Senate Bill 62 will prohibit local jurisdictions from imposing certain limitations and land use restrictions on pollinator-friendly vegetation management activities of public service companies within property, easements, or rights-of-way of public service companies under certain conditions. Native vegetation provides a wealth of benefits to our local environment. Native plants can reduce runoff from entering our waterways, improve air quality, and increase habitat for native species such as pollinators. According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, many pollinator species in Maryland are in decline due to the loss of native habitat.¹ Planting and maintaining native species with minimal pesticide use will increase pollinator diversity and abundance. As this bill outlines, vegetation native to Maryland often thrives with minimal maintenance such as annual mowing or hand pruning.

Arundel Rivers Federation encourages Maryland residents to plant native species through our Bay Loving Landscapes Program and we applaud Senator Augustine for working on legislation that will recognize the importance of native plant management and prioritize native landscapes at the state level.

For these reasons, Arundel Rivers respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 62.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

¹ Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "What's the Buzz: All About Pollinators"
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wawhatsthebuzz.aspx>