

House Bill 950, Maryland Native Plants Program

Hearing Date 3/3/2023

FAVORABLE

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I am writing **IN FAVOR** of HB 950, Maryland Native Plants Program.

It is well established that native insects, birds, and other wildlife species are in rapid and startling decline. Native plants are an essential part of the food web and necessary for the survival of all species, including humans. Marylanders are becoming more aware of this crisis and are looking for information and resources to help them contribute to rebuilding and sustaining our native wildlife.

As a Master Gardener in Baltimore County, I am often asked for information on plants native to our region, how to identify them, where to buy them, how best to grow them. As a gardener and homeowner, I am also seeking this kind of help. This program would provide an authoritative source on what plants are native where we live and where to purchase them. At retailers, these plants would be clearly identified. In addition, this program would encourage Maryland growers and retailers to grow and sell consistently labeled straight native species. Consumers want to buy and grow these plants, and Maryland can be a leader in promoting native plants and creating new businesses, as well as supporting positive solutions to the environmental crisis we face. In conjunction with the 2022 legislation (HB15/SB7) that focused on reducing invasive plants, this program can make a real difference in Maryland.