



Forming Faithful Stewards,
Caring for Sacred Waters

PO Box 6791
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Maryland Native Plants Program
House Bill 950
FAVORABLE**

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, I write to urge your support for the Maryland Native Plants Program (HB 950) to advance this bill favorably from committee.

We enthusiastically support this program to increase awareness around and practice of planting native species. As you know, planting native species is critical to ensuring a vibrant and resilient ecosystem. Natives can withstand the pressures of drought, heat, and insects common in our Maryland hardiness zone. This means they need less human maintenance – less watering, less pesticides, and promote food and pollen sources for native insects and animals. **If there's one thing we can all do to create climate-resilient yards, it's plant *only* native species.**

In our work with faith-based congregations, we have observed first-hand how many well-intentioned people do not fully understand the importance of native plantings, where to find them, and how to not accidentally purchase non-natives. Even we at IPC are not experts – a recent online blog we posted accidentally depicted a non-native plant. **One thing we love about this bill is that it will create simple lists, labels, and other tools to help consumers clearly recognize natives,** stay away from non-natives, and help acquire new knowledge so that it become second-nature over time.

We also are aware that in some parts of the state it is difficult to find nurseries that sell more than just a few native species. Increased awareness among consumers would hopefully increase demand for these products, which opens up market-driven opportunities for retailers.

Our network of congregations is deeply committed to earth-centered initiatives and educating their members how to live in harmony within the ecosystem of which we humans are just one part. **House Bill 950 reinforces the importance of being mindful of our gardening choices and**



living with grace in this ecosystem we all share with one another and other species. We hope you will look favorably upon this bill and support its advancement.

Sincerely,


Jodi Rose
Executive Director