

EARTH SANGHA

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Del. Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
HB0950
March 1, 2023
IN SUPPORT


I am providing written testimony in support of Maryland House Bill 950 sponsored by Del. Dana Stein to promote the increased use of native plants in both residential and commercial landscapes. As Executive Director of the Earth Sangha, a local environmental non-profit, I believe HB 950 is an important step for Maryland to protect natural areas and reestablish biodiverse landscapes that support plant and wildlife conservation.

The Earth Sangha has 25 years of experience protecting the native flora of the Washington D.C. region with a focus on the propagation and restoration of local ecotype native plants. To that end, we operate an exclusively local-ecotype plant nursery propagating over 300 species of wildflower, grass and grass-allies, ferns, trees, and shrubs, distributing over 50,000 plants annually. We work closely with ecologists, botanists, and land managers across local, state, and federal agencies as well as other non-profits, schools, faith organizations, and private landowners to protect our locally native plants and their habitats.

Native plants form the backbone of our ecosystems, providing food for pollinators, habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, and crucially, by providing food for insect herbivores like caterpillars— a fundamental building block for our ecosystems. Unfortunately, non-native plants do not provide these same positive ecological interactions. Indeed, many commercially-available non-native plants become invasive and degrade our natural areas, reducing the quality of habitat, and spoiling natural areas and the public's enjoyment thereof.

Integrating native plants into residential and commercial areas will not just foster beautiful landscapes but help recreate a biodiverse and climate resilient environment that we can be proud to pass on to our children, our grandchildren, and generations forward.

Sincerely,



Matt Bright
Executive Director
Earth Sangha
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