

HB0178 State Designations - State Spirit - Maryland Rye  
SUPPORT

Dear Madam Joseline Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health and Government Affairs Committee,

My name is Bradley Humbert and I am the owner of Bear Branch Malt which is an integral part of my family farm in Carroll County. To supply our on-farm malting operation we grow rye and other grains as well as purchase grain from other local farmers. In addition to selling raw grain we transform the grain through the malting process which involves: steeping, germinating, kilning, and packaging. This packaged malt is then delivered to distilleries, breweries, and bakeries throughout the state.

I am writing to express my support of HB 178, making Maryland Rye the official state spirit. This bill will put a spotlight on a product that continues to positively impact local farms. Rye is often used as a winter cover crop and has helped reverse erosion and capture excess nutrients that may otherwise end up in the bay. Rye grain used in spirits and malting fetches a premium price per bushel and further incentivises farmers to grow and harvest this beneficial crop. It also contributes a unique flavor to our local beverages including whiskey and beer.

For the last three months my malthouse has dedicated its production to malting Maryland rye and I see potential for malted rye to account for half of my annual production. Maryland craft beverage production in the modern era is still in its infancy and this bill will help promote Maryland producers on a national scale.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of putting Maryland Rye on the map with a favorable report for HB 178.

Sincerely,

Bradley Humbert