

MARYLAND STATE BAR ASSOCIATION ANIMAL LAW SECTION

February 15, 2024

RE: Written Testimony in Support of SB 916
Maryland State Bar Association, Animal Law Section

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland State Bar Association Animal Law Section is in support of SB916, a bill which is necessary to protect Maryland's native species from extinction.

I. Species Extinctions are Accelerating Rapidly

The United Nations reported that nature is declining at rates unprecedented in human history and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating rapidly. One million species are threatened with extinction, including over 40% of amphibians and over 33% of marine mammals.

Maryland's diverse environment provides a range of habitats for remarkable species threatened with extinction. The eastern shore is home to the world's smallest and rarest sea turtle (the Kemp's Ridley) and largest mammal (the blue whale). The monarch butterfly is an iconic species that aids in pollinating plants throughout the state. The list of Maryland's remarkable and endangered species goes on – and this bill is necessary to ensure that the list is an effective tool for conservation.

II. Conservation Strategies Should be Based on Current Ecological Data

This will strengthen Maryland's ability to identify threatened species through local resources and implement appropriate conservation strategies based on ecological data. The timeline requirement of the bill is necessary to clarify the review process for conservation methods.

III. Data collected will benefit federal and international policymakers, which gives Maryland a stronger voice in how to best protect our own resources

The data acquired from local tracking and reporting will ultimately assist federal and international decision making. This will induce appropriate and cohesive conservation strategies from all stakeholders, while ensuring that Maryland has a seat at every table which makes decisions regulating our state's natural resources.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Kimberly Fullerton

Legislative Liaison

Maryland State Bar Association Animal Law Section