

Testimony in favor of SB915
Jeremy Tidd
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My name is Jeremy Tidd, and I am strongly advocating for the passage of the bill SB915. In my 20 plus years of horticultural industry work, I've witnessed firsthand the detrimental impact invasive plants have on our environment and economy.

During my early years at a conventional plant nursery I saw people's desire to connect with nature. They would come in with the best of intentions to steward their land and often leave with invasive plants in hand. Those customers depended on the nursery to sell them plants that would enhance their property and lives only to leave with plants like english ivy, invasive fountain grass and bamboos that would not only take over their properties but also spread through the community.

As a landscape contractor, I've worked on thousands of gardens. Every single property I've worked on had been negatively impacted in some way by invasive species, whether homeowners inherited these problems or inadvertently caused them. Many clients were overwhelmed or didn't fully grasp the importance of addressing the issue. Others simply couldn't afford fix a problem someone else created. A science-based Maryland state list of invasive plant species would provide a crucial resource for contractors guiding clients towards informed decisions and help mitigate hidden expenses being passed to future property owners.

This isn't just a backyard problem. Far from where these plants are sold you'll find the invasive plant trade carving pieces of our remaining wild spaces. I've been working with the national park near the VA/MD border and seen firsthand how the invasive ivy leaved speedwell is edging out native, at risk Eastern Buttercup, and this is miles away from where retail invasives are being planted.

As an owner of a native plant nursery in Maryland, invasives take my time and divert client's resources before they even come through the door. 50% of the time it takes to establish a new production garden in the nursery goes to removing invasives. Once established, controlling invasives consumes up to 50% of my maintenance budget which significantly impacts retail prices, my ability to scale up my business, and the effectiveness of my efforts to provide native plants.

The passage of this bill is an essential step towards protecting Maryland's environment, economy, and native biodiversity. By banning invasive plants, we can mitigate their harmful effects, preserve native ecosystems, and promote sustainable landscaping practices. I urge you to consider the positive impacts of this legislation and support its enactment for the benefit of present and future generations. Thank you!