



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

February 16, 2024

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

SB 916

Wildlife – Conservation -Endangered and Threatened Species

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), on behalf of our Maryland supporters, strongly supports Senate Bill 916. This legislation creates an important framework and interval that addresses the inadequacies of current state law in reviewing the listing and unlisting of endangered and threatened species, and in achieving state and federal conservation and recovery goals.

The potential threats and impacts to the thousands of wildlife species across our state are many and varied, and the scope of information and data required to steward our wildlife population is both large and dynamic. SB 916 is central to providing a process for collecting and evaluating information about the status of wildlife populations and will, in consultation with Agency experts, provide a wider and more timely view of the impacts and population trends in wildlife species throughout Maryland.

This process, and the 5-year review interval the legislation establishes, will provide agency experts with a finer-tuned sense of population declines along with the reasons for those trends, enhancing their ability to take the necessary actions that both arrest as well as correct population declines. This legislation will not only allow stewards to take appropriate actions earlier to prevent species from becoming endangered, but it will also provide more updated information to help make timely decisions about removing species from listing when they have recovered or when endangered and threatened species are brought to the point where more substantial actions including total protections are no longer needed.

This legislation helps to both strengthen and clarify a process for management actions and considerations that will help achieve state and federal conservation goals. It complements the federal Endangered Species Act, and it provides the ability to take local and state actions that will lead to fewer number of species becoming imperiled in the first place and more recovered species overall.

We thank the committee for its consideration of this legislation and request a favorable vote on SB 916.

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