

SB 916 - CBF - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Allison Colden

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 916

Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species – Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations

Date: February 16, 2024

Position: **Favorable**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Allison Colden

MD Executive Director

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 916 which updates the definition of “fish” and “wildlife” with respect to defining threatened and endangered (TE) species, requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to review and update regulations every 5 years, and outlines information that must be submitted to petition for addition or removal of a species from the state’s threatened and endangered species list.

Scientists have declared the current time period as the “sixth mass extinction” event, driven by human impacts, including habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, invasive species, and climate change. In Maryland alone, nearly 350 species are at risk of extinction or extirpation. Erosion of protections under the federal Endangered Species Act in recent years have placed TE species at greater risk than ever before and necessitates strong state protections to prevent future species listings and further decline.

SB 916 seeks to update the state’s existing TE species statute by including specific definitions for “fish” and “wildlife” as well as requiring DNR to review, and update if warranted, TE species regulations every 5 years. Given rapidly changing environmental conditions due to climate change, periodic review of regulations to ensure they are sufficiently protective of TE species and their habitats is warranted.

SB 916 also outlines data needs and requirements for petitions for listing or delisting species in the state. This is a critical component to evaluating the need for listing as data gaps are one of the largest challenges for state agencies with limited staff and resources. This is particularly true for less charismatic and rare species, like freshwater mussels, insects, amphibians, plants, and other invertebrates. Defining data needs will help scientists, non-profit organizations, and even hobby naturalists to understand and collect the data needed to secure protections for species in need of conservation.

CBF urges the Committee’s FAVORABLE report on SB 916.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

SB916_Brooks.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 303
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3606 · 301-858-3606
800-492-7122 Ext. 3606
Benjamin.Brooks@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Windsor Mill Office
8419 Liberty Road, Suite B
Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244
410-496-4037

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB916
**Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species – Definitions, Petitions,
and Regulations**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 16, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB916 Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species – Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations. The purpose of this bill is to codify the way in which the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) identifies and reviews endangered and threatened species.

As of November 2023, the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service has identified 526 native Maryland animals that are most in need of conservation efforts. These creatures play a crucial role in the State’s ecosystem, however, the current mechanisms that DNR uses to identify these animals are internal and uncodified procedures. SB916 will ensure that Maryland’s best practices for endangered and threatened species are reflected in law.

The bill will codify the scientific evidence requirements for petitions to list and delist an endangered species. This will not only make the petitioning process more transparent, but it will also ensure that the Agency lists and delists animals with an evidence-based process. Further, the bill requires DNR, by July 1, 2026, and at least every five years, to review and update the animal and plant protected species lists. Having up-to-date information on the state of an endangered species allows the Agency to better protect them while efficiently distributing its resources. Lastly, this bill will give a more comprehensive definition to “fish” and “wildlife”. The Endangered Species Act is unclear whether sea-life like sponges, corals, and barnacles are considered protected creatures along with certain other species. Despite this ambiguity, it is still necessary to safeguard these creatures which is why DNR currently interprets the Endangered Species Act to include all animals. SB916 will fix this lack of clarity and ensure that these kinds of species remain protected.

These proposed changes have little impact on the current day-to-day operations of DNR while ensuring that the Agency's best practices for endangered and threatened species are clear and codified.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report on SB916.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks

SB0916_DNR_EEE_SUP_2-16-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 16, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 916

SHORT TITLE: Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species – Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports Senate Bill 916 because it adds a definition to the process by which changes are made to the Threatened and Endangered Species list.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department monitors populations of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered species and periodically changes the legal protection status of native Maryland plants and wildlife. This bill refines the process by which changes are made to the regulations and defines a schedule for the Secretary of Natural Resources to bring changes forward.

BILL EXPLANATION

SB 916 refines the legal definition of a fish in Maryland, further describes what is needed for a listing petition, and charges the Department of Natural Resources with reviewing Threatened and Endangered species-related regulations every five years. It sets out scientific parameters for listing decisions. SB 916 further defines who may petition the Department to list a species as Threatened or Endangered or to remove a species from the list of protected species and what information is required in such a petition.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

Arundel Rivers Testimony FAV SB916 Endangered Spec

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



PO Box 760 Edgewater, MD
21037

410-224-3802
www.arundelrivers.org

Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 916 – Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species – Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations

Education, Energy, and the Environment
February 16, 2024

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB916**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Senate Bill 916 will require the Department of Natural Resources to review the endangered and threatened species list for the state and update regulations if deemed necessary in a timely manner. Additionally, this bill will allow an interested person to petition with evidence for a species to be considered endangered or threatened by the Department.

The language within this proposed bill is consistent with language within the Endangered Species Act and it includes some general updating to existing regulation to make our state consistent with federal policies. The current report of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species in Maryland comprises of “519 native Maryland animals that are among the least understood, the rarest, and the most in need of conservation efforts.”¹ This report is an invaluable tool for conservation, preservation, and education of our communities and natural environments.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports protecting our state’s rare, threatened, and endangered species and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT ON SENATE BILL 916**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elle Bassett".

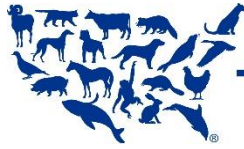
Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

¹ Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service Natural Heritage Program. *List of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Animals of Maryland*. 2021.

SB916_FAV_HSUS.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV



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.

For more information contact Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Maryland State Director
jbevandangel@humanesociety.org | C 410-303-7954

MSBA.WrittenTestimony.SB916.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Fullerton

Position: FAV

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 Kemps 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

Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Spec

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 16, 2024

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations – SB 916 – Support.

Chair Feldman, Vice - Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations – SB 916.

Requiring certain petitions to review the listing status of endangered or threatened species to contain certain information regarding the distribution, life and habitat needs of the species and relevant information about the status of a species; requiring the Secretary of Natural Resources to review and, if warranted, update certain regulations listing endangered or threatened species on or before July 1, 2026, and every 5 years thereafter; and altering the definitions of "fish" and "wildlife" for certain purposes.

This bill essentially outlines specific protocols for the Secretary of Natural Resources to follow so that Maryland can make informed decisions about the status of existing protected species as well as which additional species need the critical protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act has been an effective tool for ensuring the preservation of species whose numbers were dwindling to very dangerous numbers. Maryland Votes for Animals is committed to maintaining the strength and integrity of the ESA and its goal of protecting imperiled species in their habitats to maintain the biological diversity in our state.

Thanks to Senator Brooks for sponsoring SB 916. I urge the committee for a favorable report.

SB 916 - National Aquarium - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Maggie Ostdahl

Position: FAV



NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 16, 2024

Bill: SB 916 – Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for **Senate Bill 916 - Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations**. The bill codifies regular review and, if warranted, updating of certain regulations listing endangered or threatened species; and provides the ability to petition the state to review listing or unlisting of endangered or threatened species.

Saving wildlife and habitats is one of the National Aquarium's three strategic conservation goals. Our staff and volunteers inspire diverse audiences to learn about ecosystem health and be involved in restoring critical habitat. Even as we work with others towards solutions, we are acutely aware of the global biodiversity crisis and the risks it brings given that we all depend on natural resources and the ecological services they provide.

Across the U.S., 34% of plants and 40% of animals are at risk of extinction.¹ Closer to home, approximately 8% of the 15,000 plant and animal species that live throughout Maryland are considered rare, uncommon, or declining.² Regular review of which species are most at risk is one crucial way to support the many efforts to slow or better yet reverse their decline.

Strengthening how Maryland addresses species conservation and protection can also contribute to regional collaborations and help prevent a species from reaching the point of being listed under the Endangered Species Act. In this time of significant loss of biodiversity, we need more precautionary approaches to species conservation, and a clearer understanding of which species to focus our attention.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 916.

Contact:

Ryan Fredriksson
Vice President, Government Affairs
410-385-8276
rfredriksson@aqua.org

Maggie Ostdahl
Sr. Conservation Policy Manager
410-385-8275
mostdahl@aqua.org

¹ NatureServe 2023. Biodiversity in Focus: United States Edition. <https://www.natureserve.org/bif>

² Maryland State Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025.

https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/SWAP_Submission.aspx

2024 SB0916 Testimony against 2024-02-16.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Dear Committee Members:

SB0916 is another World Economic Forum UNAgenda21 globalists' dream, essentially an incremental step to denying property rights under the guise of biodiversity. Right out of the United Nations' playbook, "Property rights are not absolute and unchanging, but rather a complex, dynamic and shifting relationship between two or more parties, over space or time. ...Harvesting quota, emissions permits and the development rights are examples of such rights."**

Here is an article outlining some of the concerns of anyone who owns property:
<https://rangefire.us/2019/03/09/agenda-21-wildlands-project-what-you-need-to-know/>

Like many of these policies, they sound very nice on the surface (we all want to protect living things and the environment around us) but they lead to a socialist framework of governance and control of all people and resources, and sadly most people do not see this big picture. We didn't elect the United Nations and do not want their policies here.

Please vote against SB0916

**The United Nations intended that the implementing language for the Biodiversity Treaty be taken from the Global Biodiversity Assessment (GBA).

Alan Lang, Dist 31
242 Armstrong Lane
Pasadena, MD 21122
410-336-9745
Alanlang1@verizon.net

SB0916 oppose.pdf
Uploaded by: Peggy Williams
Position: UNF

SB0916

OPPOSE

Dear Committee Members:

This bill is another World Economic Forum UNAgenda21 globalists' dream, essentially an incremental step to denying property rights under the guise of biodiversity. Right out of the United Nations' playbook, "Property rights are not absolute and unchanging, but rather a complex, dynamic and shifting relationship between two or more parties, over space or time. ...Harvesting quota, emissions permits and the development rights are examples of such rights."** Here is an article outlining some of the concerns of anyone who owns property: <https://rangefire.us/2019/03/09/agenda-21-wildlands-project-what-you-need-to-know/> Like many of these policies, they sound very nice on the surface (we all want to protect living things and the environment around us) but they lead to a socialist framework of governance and control of all people and resources, and sadly most people do not see this big picture. We didn't elect the United Nations and do not want their policies here. Take this bill and other bills like it off the docket please and don't bring it back.

**The United Nations intended that the implementing language for the Biodiversity Treaty be taken from the Global Biodiversity Assessment (GBA).

Thank you.

Peggy Williams

Severna Park

D31