



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 979

Agriculture – Invasive Plant Species – Regulation
(Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act)

Date: February 28, 2024
To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: **Favorable**
From: Doug Myers
MD Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 979 which makes several changes to the existing invasive plant species protocols and includes aquatic invasive species.

A functioning ecosystem depends on native plants and animals interacting with the abiotic environment. Non-native species take advantage of disturbances in the landscape and a lack of native predators to expand into new areas, sometimes with catastrophic consequences for agriculture, commerce, and the environment.

CBF participated in a recent status assessment with DNR and Native Plant Society based on these new protocols for 4 invasive aquatic species. While still time-consuming, it is considerably more rapid than the older risk assessment and allows for ranking that acknowledges positive or neutral attributes of non-native species in the ranking (e.g. hydrilla and milfoil as pioneer species for native SAV).

The consolidated list of invasive species determines which species will be prohibited from sale or trade. It does not affect eradication efforts, although, ease or difficulty of eradication is considered in the status assessments. Forbidding the sale and trade of the state's most invasive species is a head start on needed eradication efforts and a crucial step in stemming the tide of new invasive species.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 979.

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.