

Dear House Committee Chair Korman and ENT Committee Members,

I ask you to please provide a favorable report on HB979, the Invasive Plant Species Bill.

I am writing to you as a Columbia resident who learned the hard way about the destructive power of invasive plants. Twenty years ago, my husband and I unwittingly purchased a home near what was a quaint little grove of bamboo next to a stream on adjacent Columbia Association Open Space. We loved the privacy it gave us and the adventures it gave to our children who played in it. For the first few years it was fine, but the grove began to grow exponentially and soon every year became a months-long battle with thick bamboo canes sprouting in our yard and closer and closer to our home, growing unimaginably taller every day. Eventually the bamboo grew up and down both sides of the streambanks and came to occupy and destroy well over half an acre of woodland. Our neighbor on the other side of the stream and bamboo forest had already had their house completely engulfed on three sides by this bamboo, so we knew we had to fight to protect our home and our property.

For years we appealed for help from Columbia Association, while we endlessly sawed down 60-foot-tall canes and stacked them longwise in towering piles in the bamboo forest. There was nowhere else to put the immense amount of dead vegetation from cutting down such tall bamboo.

We finally received help 17 years after we purchased our home, when Columbia Association stepped in to begin cleaning up what had begun as a small ornamental clump in someone else's backyard, and which had come to threaten the property of six homes, penetrate and crack open our sewer pipes, and destroy a full half acre of woodland. This photo shows a large forestry mulcher grinding a path through the bamboo during the first cut. I don't know how many tens of thousands of dollars this single bamboo grove has cost Columbia Association, but I know that after three years they are still working to remove it, and I am still cutting back sprouts and attempting to keep it from resurging, which it could do with lightning speed if left unmanaged.



Living next to this invasive plant – and the 20 years we've spent in an ongoing attempt to stave it off and protect our property – has been a nightmare. You can prevent similar nightmares in the future by your favorable report today on the Invasive Plant Species Bill to *stop the sale of invasive plants in Maryland*.

Thank you for your attention,
Kathleen Reilly
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