

Testimony in favor of HB979
Jeremy Tidd
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Hello, My name is Jeremy Tidd, and I am strongly advocating for the passage of the bill HB979. My support for this bill has been informed by over 20 years of horticultural industry work, where I've witnessed firsthand the detrimental impact invasive plants have on our environment and economy.

One of my first jobs was working at a conventional retail nursery. At that nursery I was able to witness daily people's desire to connect and nurture nature. They would come in with the best of intentions to steward their land and leave with invasive plants in hand. Those customers walked into that business thinking they would leave with something to enhance their property only to leave having been sold 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 worked on thousands of properties. 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, and they balked at the cost of thorough invasive removal. A science-based Maryland state list of invasive plant species would provide a crucial resource for contractors guiding clients towards informed decisions and home owners seeking concise resources.

This isn't just a backyard problem. Far from where these plants are sold you'll find the invasive plant trade taking a bite out of our remaining wild spaces. I've been working with the national park near the VA/MD border and I've seen firsthand how the invasive ivy leaved speedwell is edging out the 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, I face an uphill battle every day combatting invasives. For instance, 50% of the time it takes to establish a new production garden bed is dedicated to removing invasives. Once it's established it's a continual resource drain to keep invasives out, requiring up to 50% of my maintenance time and budget. Thos extra efforts significantly impact retail prices, my ability to scale up my business, and the effectiveness of my efforts to restore Maryland's ecosystems.

In conclusion, the passage of this bill is imperative to protect 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 significant implications of this legislation and support its enactment for the benefit of present and future generations. Thank you for your attention and consideration.