

HB0909 - Agriculture - Invasive Plant Species - Regulation (Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act)

Testimony before the Maryland House Committee for Environment and Transportation

February 28, 2024

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Ms. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michael Loll. I am a member of the Columbia Association Weed Warriors group, and a homeowner in Columbia, MD. In both roles, I have seen how invasive plant species have spread through our forests, our farms, and our yards, harming all of them. I provide written testimony today in **strong support of HB0864.**



This is an example of a grove of trees near my home being strangled by invasive shrubs (probably Multiflora rosa) and vines. I am sure you have seen similar scenes driving along roads in our state and elsewhere. Invasive species kill trees badly needed for greenhouse gas absorption and wildlife habitat. Non-native invaders compete with, and often overcome, native plants that provide food and shelter for pollinators and birds. Farmers struggle to rid their fields of weeds originating from overseas. In short, invasive non-native plants degrade our environment and impose significant costs on the American farmer. Taxpayers often are left to pay the costs for removing these species where possible, and providing subsidies to those harmed by their profligate spread.

I am glad to see provisions in your measure that phase in a ban on harmful plants. Landscapers, nurseries, and other plant professionals need some protection in making a transition to using and selling safer plants. I think they will find that there are plenty of attractive non-native and native plants which do not spread aggressively which would be suitable for their various needs.

I encourage a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Michael Loll