

SB0916_DNR_SUP_ENT_4-3-24.pdf

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Position: FAV



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

April 3, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 916 – Third Reader

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.

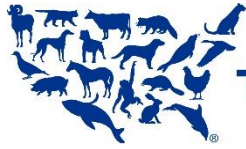
BILL EXPLANATION

Senate Bill 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. Senate Bill 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.

SB916_FAV_HSUS_cross.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

April 3, 2024

Environment and Transportation 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. **We thank this committee for passing the House bill, and urge speedy passage of the Senate bill to move this legislation towards final passage.**

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*

Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Spec

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

April 3, 2024

To: House Environment and Transportation 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 Korman, Vice - Chair Boyce, members of the Environment and Transportation 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 Environment and Transportation 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 - CBF - FAV - ENT.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

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: April 3, 2024	Position: Favorable
To: Environment & Transportation 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.

SB0916Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Peggy Williams

Position: UNF

SB0916 Oppose

Dear Committee Members:

I watched the discussions on the floor for this bill. I still don't understand the reason that we needed this bill. I am all for protecting endangered species but there is already a mechanism for doing this. What is the justification for new legislation making it easier to put species on the list other than what we already have? We have bigger problems to be worried about. Oppose this bill.

Thank you.

Peggy Williams
Severna Park
D31

[Agenda 21 Wildlands Project: What you need to know - RANGEfire!](#)