



January 29, 2024

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway 3 Administration

Position: Support: SB178

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee

I write on behalf of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) in strong support of SB178.

Insectivorous birds, such as warbler, vireos, flycatchers, and swallows, are in severe decline throughout the country (as are many other groups of birds;; see Rosenberg *et al*, 2019). One of the likely causes is the great spread of invasive plants since they host many fewer insect herbivores, notably caterpillars, than do native plants. This results in less insect food for birds (Tallamy, 2007). Invasive plants are thus akin to ecological Astroturf. HB22 will push back against the spread of invasive plants by requiring the planting of native species of plants along our highways and the control of invasive ones. The planting of native plants will thus benefit the birds and the bees!

Accordingly, we ask that the Environment and Transportation Committee give a favorable report on SB178.

MOS is a Maryland-based volunteer organization, founded in 1945, and now with some 2000 members, organized into 15 chapters throughout the state. MOS is devoted to the study, conservation and enjoyment of birds that spend at least part of their lives in Maryland. It is notable that MOS members are interested in butterflies, moths, native bees and other pollinators as well as birds.

Sincerely,

Robin G. Todd PhD

Conservation Chair, Maryland Ornithological Society

Robin.todd@mdbirds.org

10174 Green Clover Drive

Ellicott City, MD 21042

References: see page 2.

References:

Rosenberg, K.V. *et al.*, 2019, Decline of North American Avifauna, *Science*, 366, pp. 120-124
Tallamy, D.W. 2007. *Brig Nature Home*, Timber Press (358 pp)