



## Office of The Mayor Celina R. Benitez

1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 [MountRainierMD.org](http://MountRainierMD.org)

### **Subject: Support for Maryland Senate Bill 74 (2024) Designating American Persimmon as the Official State Fruit**

#### **Dear Chair Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Distinguished Members of the Maryland House of Delegates Health and Government Operations Committee**

On Behalf of the City of Mount Rainier Mayor and Council, I am writing to wholeheartedly express our enthusiastic **support for Maryland Senate Bill 74 (2024)**, which designates the **American Persimmon** as the **official State fruit of Maryland**. As a native Maryland varietal, the Persimmon has played an integral role in our state's history, culture, and well-being.

The Persimmon has rich Heritage imbedded, it has been intertwined with Maryland's story. From the Native Peoples who first inhabited this land to settlers, Enslaved individuals, and the diverse array of international immigrants who now call Maryland home, the Persimmon has nourished and sustained generations. Its presence is a testament to our shared agricultural heritage.

Maryland faces several food deserts, where fresh, nutritious options are scarce. The Persimmon, with its rich nutritional content and native to Maryland, can be a valuable resource. By planting Persimmon trees in community spaces, we empower residents to access wholesome food and improve their well-being.

The City of Mount Rainier is leading in the efforts in creating a Native Plant network with several cities across the State to not just bring more awareness and education regarding native Plants while also creating beautiful green public space, as well incentivizing residents to utilized their front lawns by planting Native Maryland Plans and Trees. The Persimmon as an example can contributes to reforestation efforts as its canopy coverage benefits our ecosystem, providing shade, habitat, fresh Fruit and beauty.

I urge you to please support Senate Bill 74 with unwavering enthusiasm. Let the Persimmon symbolize our commitment to nature, health, and unity. Together, we can cultivate a stronger, more vibrant Maryland—one where the Persimmon thrives alongside our shared dreams.

Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email [MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org](mailto:MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Celina R. Benitez*

Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier