

February 17, 2026

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: SB0431 Fish and Wildlife-Endangered and Threatened Species and Migratory Birds-Regulations, Lists, Petitions, Essential Habitats, and Takings

Position: Favorable

Dear Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

I wholeheartedly support SB0431. With the erosion of wildlife protections at the federal level, as caused by the gutting of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the efforts to hamstring the Endangered Species Act, it is imperative that states take action to protect their species for future generations.

I am especially concerned about birds. I have been a birder since 1994 and have seen over 400 species in Maryland. I have seen numbers decline over the past 30 years. Peer-reviewed science has shown we have lost almost a third of our birds in North America since 1970.ⁱ

SB0431 would extend to migratory birds the protections given by the MBTA as it was on January 1, 2025. This prohibited the “take” of birds, to include killing of bird by oil spills, open oil waste pits, powerlines, wind turbines, and brightly illuminated buildings.

I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB0431.

Sincerely,

Kurt R. Schwarz

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kurt R. Schwarz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Columbia, Maryland

ⁱ Rosenberg, K V, A M Dokter, P J Blancher, J R Sauer, A C Smith, P A Smith, J C Stanton, A Panjabi, L Helft, M Parr & P P Marra 2019. Decline of the North American avifauna, Science 366, 120–124.
https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aaw1313?adobe_mc=MCORGID%3D242B6472541199F70A4C98A6%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1707754028