



Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay
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*Deeply rooted in native plants,
promoting native landscapes
through education, advocacy and
collaborative action.*

Testimony: HB035, Local Government - Regulatory Powers - Regulation of Tree of Heaven
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Hearing Date: February 4, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Marc Korman; Vice Chair, Michele Guyton, and honorable members of the Committee:

Located in Southern Maryland, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay, a 71-member chapter of the national organization Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, LTD¹, strongly urges your support for this bill.

Efforts to support the removal of any invasive plant species, including the Tree of Heaven, are worthy of approval. Invasive species kill native vegetation by smothering and poisoning them. Both forestry and invasive plant species specialists have advocated for the control and removal of Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) for many years.² The recent spread of an invasive insect, the spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*)³, has lent new urgency to the need for legislation that supports removal of the Tree of Heaven.

Adding Tree of Heaven to Bamboo for County action is a positive step toward preserving our natural ecosystems. It would seem prudent that this bill be expanded in the future to include those species on the prohibited invasive plants list published by the State Department of Agriculture (MDA).⁴ MDA recognizes the importance of preventing and controlling invasive plants, and legislators should follow their lead taking whatever measures we can to preserve the biodiversity of our natural ecosystems in our state. By preserving and restoring our natural ecosystems, we can preserve our treasured Chesapeake Bay for future generations.

Please approve this bill.

Wildly appreciative,

Marlene Smith

President, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay

¹ Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, LTD, a nationwide nonprofit organization with local chapters throughout the country, <https://wildones.org/>

² <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/invasives-your-woodland-tree-heaven-ailanthus-updated-2025/>

³ <https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/spotted-lantern-fly.aspx>

⁴ https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/maryland_invasive_plants_prevention_and_control.aspx