



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** Senate Bill 491 – Regulation of Invasive Plants -  
Bamboo - Prohibitions

**SPONSOR:** Senator Kramer

**HEARING DATE:** February 11, 2020

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 491**, which requires a person to dispose of and contain bamboo so as to keep it from spreading onto adjoining property or public rights-of-way. The bill changes running bamboo from a Tier 2 to a Tier 1 invasive, meaning a person may not propagate, import, transfer, sell, purchase, transport, or introduce any living part of a Tier 1 invasive plant in the State. **SB 491** establishes civil penalties for violation of the rules or laws regarding proper disposal and containment of bamboo. This bill also authorizes counties to adopt a rules or regulations to govern the upkeep and containment of bamboo and to enforce such rules or regulations.

For the first time, individuals growing bamboo will be required to properly contain the plant and may be issued a fine or penalty if they do not. Thus, the burden of dealing with runaway bamboo now falls on the source property, rather than the impacted property owner. Maryland courts have historically ruled that a neighbor cannot seek damages in court for the damages caused by your neighbor's bamboo or other invasive plant. Traditionally, it was up to individual property owners to remove the runners and shoots and not the neighbor who planted the invasive plant species.

Running bamboo can grow 12 inches a day and underground runners can travel 30 feet away from the original plant. Some species grow to a height of 40 feet or more, interfering with power lines. Since bamboo prefers moist soil, the roots have been known to clog sewer lines and water pipes. Bamboo can grow up through asphalt driveways, decks, and pools. When wet or under snow, stems bend over blocking driveways and rights of way. It can cost thousands of dollars to have it professionally removed.

Virginia , Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, Rhode Island and Connecticut have passed legislation similar to this bill. In these states even municipalities and boroughs can enact restrictions on bamboo, due to their invasive nature. For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 491** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.