



Safe Skies Maryland

***Safe Skies Maryland *ShoreRivers *Friends of Sligo Creek
*Maryland Conservation Council
*Maryland Pesticide Education Network *Sierra Club – MD Chapter**

House Bill # HB279 – Restrictions on Use – Low-Impact Landscaping

Environment and Transportation

February 11, 2020

Position: SUPPORT

This bill is designed to restrict Homeowner Associations (HOAs) from imposing unreasonable limitations on low-impact landscaping.

There are several types of low-impact landscaping options. Bio-habitat gardens, pollinator gardens, rain gardens, using native plants, and xeriscaping to name a few. The benefits of using one or more of these options is considerable.

Low-impact landscaping reduces the:

- 100 million pounds of dangerous chemicals used by homeowners EVERY YEAR
- 2 billion gallons of gas used for lawn equipment
- 3 billion pounds of toxic and carcinogenic air pollutants emitted from leaf blowers and mowers
- 9 billion gallons of water used PER DAY

Low-impact landscaping also:

- Helps keep the Chesapeake Bay healthy by reducing storm water runoff
- Supports the pollinator-friendly birds and insects that visit local gardens (which leads to more and re-blooming flowers)
- Increases fruit harvest
- Makes soil healthier
- Means increased planting of trees, which helps to keep the air we breathe cleaner

There are several ways that Homeowner Associations (HOAs) have to prevent homeowners from planting low-impact gardens. Deeds, declarations, contracts, and by-laws can be presented to prevent a homeowner from using low-impact landscaping on their property.

Instead of encouraging owners to plant sustainably, HOAs are insisting on a specific type of planting (lawns, for example). There are several cases of homeowners having to sue their HOA to be able to garden in a way that is better for the environment. HB279 addresses these issues by preventing Homeowner Associations from imposing their preconceived ideas of beauty onto others in their HOAs, and allowing them to garden sustainably by using Low-impact landscaping techniques.

We respectfully request your support for Restrictions on Use – Low-Impact Landscaping. Thank you for your consideration.

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