



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 92

Procurement – Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species – Prohibition on Use of State Funds

Date: March 31, 2021
To: Senate Education, Health
and Environmental Affairs

Position: Support
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Restoration Specialist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS HB 92** which, as amended, prohibits the purchase or planting of invasive plant species with State funds, with exceptions for indoor plantings, and for agricultural and horticultural plantings for education or research.

HB 92 seeks to ensure that trees planted to mitigate the loss of forest through development and for environmental restoration purposes are native species that help restore the local ecosystem.

Environmental restoration, including tree and shrub plantings, is part of the State of Maryland's efforts to meet Maryland's Chesapeake Watershed Implementation Plan. The State also completes plantings to mitigate clear-cutting for new transportation infrastructure and helps to fund local government restoration projects. This legislation ensure that these plantings will be native species that provide the greatest ecosystem benefits.

The strength of native species and their adaptations reduces the need for fertilizer and pesticide use and lessens the potential for pollutant runoff in the Bay

The specific adaptations of native plants allow them to flourish in the region with little to no fertilizer. They are more resistant to insects and disease therefore do not require many, if any pesticides. Planting natives in the Bay region reduces the chances of harmful fertilizer and pesticide runoff into the Bay.

Native plants provide food and cover for wildlife that are critical to the Bay region's ecosystem.

Native plants are plants that naturally occur in the region in which they have evolved and support other species in the local ecosystem. Local wildlife, such as birds, insects, and mammals are also critically dependent on native plant communities (the zebra swallowtail butterfly, for example, feeds almost exclusively on pawpaw trees during its larval stage).

Nonnatives may become invasive species that threaten ecosystems and create additional hurdles to conservation

Nonnative plants are not in balance with the local ecosystem and may take over large swaths of land, creating monoculture zones that threaten wildlife living in the local ecosystem. Removal of nonnatives can be costly. The Maryland State Highway Administration has spent substantial funding in the removal of nonnative plant species along highways and wetland restoration projects.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

HB 92 references the US Fish and Wildlife Service Chesapeake Bay Field Office comprehensive listing of native plants in the Chesapeake region including; trees, shrubs, grasses, ferns and wetland plants.¹ In order to select the appropriate plant species, this guide lists the various conditions on which these native plants will thrive. These conditions consist of the sunlight requirements, moisture and soil conditions as well as the preferred region (coastal plain, piedmont, mountains) in which these species grow.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE on HB 92.

¹ Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2005
<https://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay/resources/native-plants.html>