



7338 Baltimore Ave  
Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740

**Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**  
**Testimony on: HB92 – “Invasive Plant Species – Prohibition on Use of State Funds”**  
**Position: Support**  
**Hearing Date: March 31, 2021**

The Maryland Sierra Club submits this testimony in strong support of HB92, which prohibits the use of state funds to procure or plant invasive plants with a certain exception and minimal fiscal impact.

The exponential growth of invasive plant species in Maryland is a substantial and growing threat to our farms and natural places. The damage caused by invasive species in the United States, and the efforts to control them, are estimated to cost our country over \$138 billion annually. For example, English ivy and other invasives kill trees faster than forest stewards can control them, and are thus endangering our forests. The benefits of bringing invasive species under control include:

- a decrease in temperature extremes located in hotspots;
- increased carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change;
- decreased stormwater problem;
- expanded forest canopy; and
- increased biodiversity with more wildflowers such as spring beauty, native shrubs such as blackberry, and trees such as pawpaw.

Invasive plants from other areas of the world are harmful to our economy and environment because invasives have no natural competitors. They have characteristics such as copious amounts of seeds or runners that can allow them to eliminate nearly all other species in an area. Furthermore, they do not feed wildlife or pollinators vital to the health of our agricultural and recreational lands. Maryland trees are being strangled and overrun by invasive plants and vines destroying our climate-protecting tree canopy. With eight million acres of state land in Maryland, we cannot afford to have the negative effects of invasive plants multiplying geometrically.

Finally, when the public sees non-invasive plants at state-funded buildings, it highlights a good example in exercising stewardship over taxpayer money.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on this bill.

Lily Fountain  
Chair, Natural Places Committee  
lily.fountain@mdsierra.org

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
josh.tulkin@mdsierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest [national] grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.