



State Office
Patterson Park Audubon Center
Important Bird Area Program
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January 15, 2021

**The Maryland House of Delegates
Committee on Environment and Transportation**

HB0322 Empowering Environmental Landscaping

Position: Support

This letter is to express our strong support for HB0322 and to underscore just how important this legislation is for declining bird populations, other wildlife, human health, and water quality. Audubon Maryland-DC is one of 22 state programs of the National Audubon Society with approximately 19,000 members in Maryland.

Regulations imposed by homeowners associations and like entities in Maryland preclude residents from planting vegetable gardens for food and eco-friendly landscaping such as rain gardens and pollinator gardens on land they own. They have created millions of acres of lifeless lawns, laden with pesticides and herbicides—bad for people, pets, and wildlife. The conversion of forage and nesting habitat to lawns has been particularly hard on birds, which depend upon diverse ecosystems of native plants and healthy populations of invertebrates, especially insects.

Being able to grow your own food has enormous benefits to physical and mental health as well as educational benefits for adults and children. Rain-gardens and pollinator garden not only support many native species of flowering plants and invertebrates, but also slow runoff and thus protect the bays, and reduce the use of poisonous herbicides and pesticides that can harm birds, barefoot children, and pets.

It's time to put to bed the old-fashioned ideals of those who seek to maintain outdated, and sometimes dangerous practices, by requiring vast expanses of turf, excessive native plant control, and herbicide and pesticide use to simply cling to the narrow aesthetic of a bygone era.

If Marylanders choose to make a beautiful, healthy, and sustainable yard that is good for birds they should all have the legal right to do so.

Please vote FOR HB0322 (Low-Impact Landscaping). Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Curson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Curson, PhD
Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Maryland-DC