



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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January 28, 2021

To: House Health & Government Operations Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**Re: Support With Amendment of HB 92 - Procurement - Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species - Prohibition on Use of State Funds**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support with amendment of HB 92, legislation that prohibits state agencies from purchasing nonnative and invasive plants for public projects. The bill does allow a waiver if there are no other options. This bill would not all state agencies from purchasing sod even though it is grown in Maryland, because the seed originated from outside the state.

Invasive weeds are a major issue within the farming community. By nature, these weeds invade farm fields from nearby areas (in many cases, from public lands). So controlling invasive weeds away from the farm, reduces the amount of crop protectants farmers need to maintain a clean and healthy crop. For these reasons, MDFB is in support of the invasive plants section of this bill.

However, the non-native section of this bill becomes much more complicated. Many plants and crops grown by Maryland farmers to meet state and local government contracts are not native to Maryland. There are many reasons these plants are grown over a native plant. Some of those reasons are better remediation characteristics in the non-native plant versus a native plant when it comes to soil erosion and nutrient removal. In addition, these non-native plants have been bred to do better under a greater span of weather conditions such as extreme heat or cold and extreme floods or drought. Seed for many varieties of sod that is grown in Maryland is seed that is produced in Oregon. The State Highway projects that use Maryland grown sod, would have to apply for a waiver for every project just to use the sod that was grown in counties like Montgomery County and all other counties in the state.

**Due to the major concern with removing non-native plants from the state procurement program, MDFB would ask the committee to support an amendment to remove non-native plants from this bill and only have the bill focus on invasive plants.**

**MDFB Policy:** We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 92 WITH AMENDMENT**

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