

Date: January 28, 2021

Bill: HB 92 – Procurement - Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species - Prohibition on Use of State Funds

Position: Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for **House Bill 92, Procurement - Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species - Prohibition on Use of State Funds**, which will help minimize the harmful impact nonnative and invasive plant species have on our ecosystems.

Locally native plants have grown naturally in our region for thousands of years and are well adapted to our soil conditions and our climate. They help improve water quality because, unlike their nonnative counterparts, they do not rely on additional watering, fertilizers and pesticides to thrive. They also play an important role in supporting local wildlife and migratory species. Planting native species attracts local pollinators from caterpillars to birds and crucial bees, which help us all by pollinating everything from cultivated crops to wildflowers. When non-native plants with no natural controls to limit their spread are planted, native plants are often unable to compete for available sunlight, water and nutrients and disappear along with the support system for native wildlife.



National Aquarium staff and volunteers at Masonville Cove in 2017.

Maryland's diverse range of habitat types makes it a prime home or migration stop for many species. Due to its position along the Atlantic Flyway, Maryland provides food or places to rest for almost 500 species of birds. In addition, more than 200 species of birds nest here. Imperiled monarch butterflies can be found across the state in the summer; they need native milkweed for their young and nectar from our native flowers for fuel before they migrate south for the winter.

Over the last 20 years, the National Aquarium has planted over 1.9 million native plants through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, including restoring the vulnerable Atlantic white cedar habitat at the Eastern Shore's Nassawango Creek Preserve, to protecting coastlines with community-based restoration efforts from Baltimore City's Masonville Cove (pictured above) to the Naval Air Station Oceana-Dam Neck Annex at Virginia Beach.

HB 92 would help mitigate the impact of invasive and nonnative species by prohibiting the use of State funds to purchase or plant them, encouraging the use of native plants and protecting our ecosystems and biodiversity. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 92.**

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