

Energy-Conserving Standards (Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2023) – HB 6

TESTIMONY OF FELIX BAUM – **SUPPORT**

My name is Felix Baum, I'm a sophomore at Mt. Hebron High School. I was a part of the Anglerfish Overlords, a Lego robotics team of 4th graders focused on bird safe building practices. The theme for that year's project was "Animal Allies", tasking us with finding a unique problem relating to animals, and an innovative solution. We talked to a concerned activist who counted, one by one, the dead bodies of birds who had struck the reflective glass of the Baltimore Convention Center. We realized that reflective glass, seen so often in modern architecture across the world, was leading one billion birds to their deaths- PER year. We realized the problem with bird strikes was much bigger than the birds themselves, but what such drastically decreased populations did to natural food and supply chains. These strikes were harming the ecosystem, and at an alarming volume. It wasn't just a problem for that specific Convention Center, at that specific time, but rather a problem across the country, and one that was going to continue into the future, unless changes were made. So we talked to state and local representatives, consulted experts (like Dr. Southerland), and thought of ways to prevent fatal bird strikes. We presented our findings and project summary at the Lego League State Championship that year, and we won third place for the project! That was 6 years ago. Since then, Howard County, my home county, passed CB11 2020, requiring new commercial and government construction in Howard County to be LEED certified for bird-safe designs. I testified at the Public Hearing. I told my story, I spoke for my classmates and my peers, and the law took effect not long after it was passed. That was 3 years ago. The problem isn't over. One billion birds per year now could easily be one billion dollars per year later. It's far beyond an unacceptable number- it's one that threatens our natural world's future- the world in which myself and other young people will continue to grow up in. We care about the world we are going to inherit, and this is a problem that has no place there. It isn't just about birds, and it isn't just about the climate. This is a fight for change- a fight for a world that you would want the future generations to live in. Be that change.