



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony: HB90 “Local Government - Regulatory Powers - Control of Invasive Bamboo”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 28, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges the Committee’s support of HB90 as amended. The bill authorizes governing bodies of counties and municipalities to adopt ordinances to regulate invasive bamboo; and generally relating to the regulation of invasive bamboo. The bill defines invasive bamboo as “bamboo that is characterized by aggressive spreading behavior, including bamboo species in the genus *Phyllostachys*.” The bill allows for “the governing body of a county or municipality, by ordinance, [to] regulate invasive bamboo, including by prohibiting a person from: 1) selling invasive bamboo; 2) planting invasive bamboo; and 3) allowing invasive bamboo to grow on the property of the person without proper upkeep and appropriate containment measures, including barriers or trenches.” The bill also allows for “the governing body of a county or municipality [to] provide for the enforcement of an ordinance” and generally outlines the enforcement.

Bamboo is often used in gardens or on properties as a natural privacy screen or hedge. However, uncontrolled invasive bamboo can spread quickly and indefinitely via underground rhizomes or stems that run horizontally. Two of the running bamboo species – *Phyllostachys aurea* and *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* – have been identified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture as Tier 2 Invasive Plants. The rapid growth of bamboo can displace other plants, including natives. Additionally, bamboo rhizomes can cause damage by pushing through building foundations and above ground structures. Once established, invasive bamboo can be very expensive and difficult to eradicate because new plants can grow from rhizome fragments with nodes. Without ordinances, property owners might have little recourse other than suing if invasive bamboo infringes on their property.

Other states, including Virginia and Connecticut, and local jurisdictions have passed legislation to encourage responsible use of running bamboo and to protect adjacent property owners from the invasion of a property owner’s running bamboo.

The new language to prohibit the selling and planting of invasive bamboo strengthens the bill. This addition can help prevent landscapers and property owners not familiar with invasive bamboo’s aggressive and harmful characteristics from inadvertently planting it.

We support the bill as currently amended and urge a favorable report on HB90.

Kimberly Gross
Natural Places Committee
Kgross42@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org



Invasive running bamboo stalk coming through asphalt from a rhizome (horizontal underground stem) that grew horizontally underneath the pavement from an adjacent bamboo grove



Stalks of invasive running bamboo coming up from underneath tennis court surface from rhizomes spreading underground from bamboo grove



Stalks of invasive running bamboo sprouting into a crawlspace from underground rhizomes that spread horizontally in the soil from a bamboo grove



Invasive bamboo stalk growing behind sheathing and siding on a building



Running bamboo leaves emerging from behind sheathing and siding