



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

March 2, 2023

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB836

Maryland Native Plants Program

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States, as well as the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urges a favorable report and speedy action on SB836. This bill would encourage the use of native plants throughout the state through education, labelling, and promotion.

Native plants are not only healthier for the environment, but they provide critical habitat and food, for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Native species of plants evolved in conjunction with our native insects and birds. They support a variety of native species, while invasives of similar types will support just a few species. And often an invasive species, while it might provide food for pollinators, is less healthy and offers less nutritional value than a native species would.

It is often very difficult for the average gardener to know which plants are truly native, and which are invasive. On a personal note, I have made the mistake of planting butterfly bush, thinking it was beneficial to pollinators, only to later learn that it is invasive in Maryland and does not support native species of butterflies. This program, which would create more robust education and outreach on native plants, would be beneficial to residents who want to do what is best, but often are not sure what plants to use.

Pollinators, native birds, and other wildlife need native, local sources of food and shelter to thrive. We can create micro-habitats in our backyards, with the right tools and knowledge. SB 836 would provide those tools and we urge a favorable report.