Maryland General Assembly – Senate EEE Committee – February 2, 2023

Energy-Conserving Standards (Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2023) – SB 92

TESTIMONY OF DR. CHRISTOPHER SWAN -- **SUPPORT**

I am a waterfowl hunter who strongly support this bill as an important step for maintaining waterfowl populations important for my recreation, the economic vitality of local communities, and the quality of life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

This bill would require all newly built, acquired, or renovated buildings receiving 51% Maryland State funding to follow standards for bird-friendly windows and shielded nighttime lighting, which will both conserve energy and save birds. This is of urgent need right now as we face climate change impacts and continue to lose one billion birds each year to collisions with window glass in the United States.

These birds are part of our healthy breeding populations and their losses are unsustainable, as witnessed by the 29% reduction in bird numbers since 1970. Every year that bird populations decline, we lose valuable services of hunting, pollination, seed dispersal, and pest insect consumption. Birds are also critical to Maryland's hunting and tourism industry. In 2011, waterfowl hunters spent $14 million in Maryland as one of the nation's premier waterfowl hunting destinations.

This is a common-sense bill, where scientists and builders have come together to find proven solutions, which will save the state money over time. The methods to protect birds are codified as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Innovation Credit by the U.S. Green Building Council. Currently, builders and architects may use this credit to meet LEED certifications, but the credit is optional and we need this bill to make it mandatory.

Maryland has a chance to act locally to save money, fight climate change, and reduce the unsustainable deaths of economically important birds. Waiting even one year will see more glass buildings built and more money lost, more greenhouse gas emissions, and more birds dying.

Respectfully Submitted,

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