



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation

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

Position: Support with Amendments

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges the Committee’s support of HB90 with amendments. The bill authorizes governing bodies of counties to adopt ordinances relating to the upkeep and containment of running bamboo. The bill defines running 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, by ordinance, to prohibit a person from allowing running bamboo to grow on their property without proper upkeep and appropriate containment measures, or to spread to an adjoining property of another person or a public right-of-way. The bill allows for the governing body of a county to provide for the enforcement of an ordinance and outlines the enforcement.

Bamboo is often used in gardens or on properties as a natural privacy screen or hedge. However, uncontrolled, running 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 genera *Pseudosasa* and *Pleioblastus* can also spread rapidly when not controlled. *Pseudosasa japonica* is included in the *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*. The rapid growth of bamboo can displace other plants, including native plants. Additionally, roots can potentially cause damage by pushing through buildings foundations and above ground structures. Once established, running bamboo can be very expensive and difficult to eradicate because new plants can grow from rhizome fragments with nodes.

Many states, including Virginia and Connecticut, and local jurisdictions have passed similar 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 Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends several amendments to strengthen the bill:

- 1) Section A.1: revise the phrase “running bamboo” to “non-native running bamboo”, thereby excluding the state-rare native bamboo (switch cane: *Arundinaria tecta*) from the impact of the legislation;
- 2) Section A.1: specifically exclude the state-rare native bamboo (switch cane: *Arundinaria tecta*);
- 3) Section A.1: consider adding the genera *Pseudosasa* and *Pleioblastus* along with *Phyllostachys* to the examples of non-native running bamboos; [These are genera, not species]

- 4) Section B.1: add to the phrase regarding appropriate containment structures that they be “selected and installed according to industry standards for running bamboo” to ensure that proven, workable approaches are used; and
- 5) Section B.2: insert “any of its plant parts, including canes, rhizomes, and roots,” after “To spread” to ensure that all of the plant, even underground structures not seen above ground, are specifically included.

We urge a favorable report on HB90 and consideration of the suggested amendments, especially #1 and #2. Thank you.

Kimberly Gross
Natural Places Committee
Kgross42@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org



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

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.



Stalks coming up through a tennis court pavement because rhizomes spread underground from the grove of invasive running bamboo



Stalks of running bamboo coming up from underground rhizomes that has grown horizontally under the soil beneath the building and are now visible in the crawlspace of a building

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.



A stalk growing behind sheathing and siding on a building



Running bamboo stalks and leaves emerging from behind the sheathing and siding

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.