



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 836

Maryland Native Plants Program

Date: March 2, 2023
To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Position: Support
From: Doug Myers,
MD Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 836 which promotes the sale of native plants and increases education about and marketing and promotion of native plants throughout the state.

Native plants of Maryland are not only beautiful and diverse, but provide a host of other ecological services from support of pollinators, improvement of soil health, fish and wildlife habitats and resilience to climate change. From the water quality perspective, native plants and their adaptations to Maryland's weather patterns are better at absorbing excessive rainfall volumes and storing water underground for eventual release to surface streams than non-native plants. We call this the "green sponge" effect of our landscape. Use of native plants in urban settings can be even more important as they provide cooling shade and treatment of polluted runoff as well as a sense of connection to the natural world. Ecological science supports the maintenance of native plant cover as the best defense against the establishment of invasive species, especially along shorelines and wetlands throughout the Bay watershed.

SB 836 could shift the paradigm in the nursery industry from focusing only on plants that look pretty, to those that function in extending nature to every back yard. Wisely, the bill also creates a position within the Maryland Extension Service to specifically provide information on native plants. Extension is a trusted provider of plant information throughout the state. The position will go a long way in helping residents, businesses and the public to embrace a more resilient environment dominated by native plants and animals.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 836.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.