



SB836 – Maryland Native Plants Program

Testimony before

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 2, 2023

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mdm. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of SB836, which would establish a program to encourage and promote the use and sale of plants native to Maryland. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Senator Brooks in sponsoring this important legislation.

Most people enjoy a beautiful yard or wandering around a lovely park. But after years of importing plants, we are finally seeing the benefits of planting native species. Native plants are healthier, stronger and better suited to the natural climate. By requiring less watering, fertilizer, and pesticides, native plants help the environment and can improve air quality. They also provide the habitat needed for wildlife, such as bees, birds, and butterflies.

This bill creates a Maryland Native Plants Program, to encourage and promote the use and sale of native plants, as well as educate the public, landscapers, and others on the benefit of native species. Part of this bill creates a voluntary program for growers and retailers to be certified as a Maryland Native Plant Grower or Retailer, which will help residents buy and use native plants.

For these reasons, we support SB836.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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