



Maryland Office
Patterson Park Audubon Ctr
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March 30, 2023

To: Maryland House of Delegates - House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Subject: Favorable Testimony for **Maryland SB866 Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Appropriation**

Good afternoon. My name is Jim Brown. I am the policy director for Audubon Mid-Atlantic, here in Maryland. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic enthusiastically supports the SB866 as amended. Funding environmental education, habitat restoration, stormwater projects, tree plantings, and community greening is critical to protecting the ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and to sustaining a movement of climate stewards in all of our diverse communities and landscapes here in Maryland and across the bay watershed. Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) fund invaluable projects and conduct meaningful engagement in every county and legislative jurisdiction in the state. These programs connect people to nature and plant the seeds for Maryland's future generations of conservationists and sustainability practitioners.

For more than a decade, the Trust has supported Patterson Park Audubon Center's community-centered conservation programs that seek to improve Baltimore City for migratory birds, the Bay, and our communities. Because of investment from the Trust, Audubon has fostered youth leadership on environmental issues, elevating their voices for healthier waterways, habitats, schoolyards, and neighborhoods. Additionally, Audubon and a dozen non-profit partners received multi-year capacity building funds to grow collaborative leadership in Baltimore City and County to achieve shared greening goals to restore ecosystems and waterways. Audubon has leveraged this investment to garner support from other sources, multiplying the impact, thanks to the seed planted by the Trust. The Trust is an essential partner in creating a healthier Chesapeake Bay watershed. SB866 will sustain this funding critical to having a healthy Bay and a resilient Maryland.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown

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