



# Howard County Council

Deb Jung  
Councilmember

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District 4

George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

February 6, 2023

HB6

Deb Jung

Howard County Council

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Delegate Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Delegate Kelly, and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

Thank you to Delegate Terri Hill for sponsoring this bill.

In 2020, I sponsored Howard County Council Bill 11 that required all commercial and County buildings to incorporate LEED Pilot Credit #55 which includes bird-safe building design standards. My interest in the bill came about thanks to the advocacy efforts of Mark Southerland of Safe Skies Maryland and an elementary school Lego Robotics team that promoted bird-safe buildings as their research project. The bill was crafted with the involvement of the County's Office of Community Resources & Sustainability, the Natural Resources Division, and the Department of Inspections, Licenses, & Permits.

My bill was unanimously supported by all four of my Council colleagues, including our Republican Councilmember, and demonstrates that adoption of the bird-safe LEED credit can garner bipartisan support.

The Natural Resources Division had conducted bird strike counts on County buildings that supported the need for a reduction of transparent and reflective glass in building construction. The Robinson Nature Center, which is a County-owned building promoting environmental education and access, recently received retrofitting funding to address problematic areas of the building to reduce bird collisions. No current County buildings have been built since the passage of the law.

6300 Merriweather in Downtown Columbia will be the first commercial building in the County to boast bird-safe features. This building is currently in the planning phase and is the latest in the Howard Hughes portfolio envisioned as a 16-story, 250-foot tall office building scheduled for completion in 2025. The building theme is a modern "treehouse" with stacked glass levels

encased in recycled materials. The building features bird-safe elements so that the built environment can both mimic and protect nature.

Residential buildings also present significant hazards to birds but I didn't address this problem in my bill as I felt that systematic change required cautious implementation to ensure that commercial products are available to meet the LEED credit requirements.

Bird-safe building design is a vital component of supporting the General Assembly's Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 and is a feasible construction option for public buildings. HB6 is a reasonable and responsible step towards fulfilling our environmental pledge to the residents of this State.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Jung". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deb Jung  
Councilmember, District 4