

Date: February 8, 2023

Bill: HB 6 – Department of General Services – Energy- Conserving Standards (Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2023)

Position: Support

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for **House Bill 6, Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2023**, which will help reduce bird fatalities across Maryland and improve energy efficiency in public buildings throughout the state.

Experts estimate that glass collisions are a leading cause of bird mortality second only to habitat loss worldwide¹, and annually result in the deaths of at least 600 million birds in the U.S.² Maryland is part of the Atlantic Flyway, one of four major north-south migratory routes birds travel over North America and the one through which land is the most densely populated. Fortunately, solutions exist to dramatically limit fatal bird strikes and protect bird populations through building design, installation of bird-safe glass and films, and limits to interior lighting at night.

In recent years, the National Aquarium has worked with our animal care experts to cover over 3,000 sq. ft of existing glass with bird-safe dot patterns. These patterns create new, highly visible signage and have significantly reduced bird strikes on our building.

Thanks to support of the state, the National Aquarium recently replaced the iconic glass pyramid above the *Upland Tropical Rain Forest*. Each of the new 684 glass pyramid panels is made of entirely bird safe glass. The bird safe glass has an added benefit of increasing energy efficiency because the etched pattern, which makes it visible to birds, also diffuses sunlight and reduces hotspots within the exhibit. Incorporating bird safe glass into the design and build process is far more cost-effective than retrofitting existing glass, with the added benefit of increased energy efficiency overall.

HB 6 would help mitigate bird collisions across the state by requiring similar strategies be utilized on state buildings or that bird-safe building and design standards be considered from the start of new projects. Our experience shows that many of the methods used to prevent bird collisions not only reduce bird fatalities but also make economic sense and increase sustainability within the built environment. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.**

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¹ Klem, D. 2008. Avian mortality at windows: the second largest human source of bird mortality on Earth. In: [Proceedings of the Fourth International Partners in Flight Conference, Tundra to Tropics](#), pp 244-251.

² Loss, S.R. et al. 2014. Bird-building collisions in the United States: Estimates of annual mortality and species vulnerability. *The Condor* 116:1. <https://doi.org/10.1650/CONDOR-13-090.1>