



February 8, 2023

**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB188 Natural Resources—Wildlife Advisory Commission—Membership**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) strongly supports HB1888, which would require diversification of the Wildlife Advisory Commission by adding an academic researcher to the Commission. The bill would also require representation from the passive wildlife recreation community. The Commission as currently configured includes representatives of the hunting, fishing, farming, and wildlife preservation communities.

Our members are part of the passive wildlife recreation community. We venture out just about every day, and report our sightings to eBird, the on-line database of bird occurrence and abundance. We also operate three seasonal bird counts, which are databased. And we take part Audubon's Christmas Bird Counts, which have gone on for over a century, and are also databased. We have conducted two state-wide Breeding Bird Atlases and have begun the fourth year of the Third Breeding Bird Atlas. Our members also seek out, and research diverse other creatures, to include reptiles and amphibians, butterflies and moths, dragon and damselflies, bees, and even fungi. All this to point out that the passive wildlife community has much to contribute to the Commission in its mission to monitor epizootic diseases, promote wildlife and habitat conservation, educate the public, promote science and research, and, most notably, conserving Maryland's diverse wildlife resources.

We believe that inclusion of academic researchers and members of the passive wildlife recreation community will only enhance the work of the Commission. Hence we support HB188, and ask that the Committee issue a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Kurt R. Schwarz  
Conservation Chair Emeritus  
Maryland Ornithological Society  
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