



February 2, 2023

**HB6 Department of General Services - Energy-Conserving Standards (Maryland Sustainable Building Act of 2023)
FAVORABLE**

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

The Green Towson Alliance writes in support of HB6, the Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2023. We support the bill's goals to increase the energy efficiency of glazing in state buildings and to reduce deadly bird collisions.

Large areas of architectural glazing can be deadly to birds killing close to one billion birds in the United States annually according to the Audubon Society. Glass that is highly reflective or highly transparent creates visual voids that can reflect vegetation in the glass. Birds can't perceive the difference between a tree and its reflection and may fly into the glass. During periods of high migration, nighttime lighting of buildings can confuse birds further contributing to deadly collisions making building collisions the second greatest source of human-caused avian mortality in the United States. Large areas of glass in our building facades also lead to heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer causing increased energy usage.

The good news is that energy efficient glazing and bird-safe designs are readily available in the market and are becoming standard practice in many locations around the country. By using patterned glass, translucent glass, UV coatings, or sun shades, the incidence of bird collisions can be reduced to almost zero. These strategies are all compatible with using coatings to increase energy efficiency. Shielding and minimizing lighting during periods of nighttime migration with automatic control technologies can also save birds.

The 2022 annual report from North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) shows more than half the bird species in the United States and Canada are in decline. Birds are an indicator of biodiversity and the health of our ecosystems. They are crucial for our survival and the survival of the planet. Birds are essential pollinators and seed dispersers. They balance the population of pests and control pathogens by eating carrion, and they provide the intangible delight of birdsong and beauty.

The members of the Green Towson Alliance work to increase biodiversity and promote a sustainable environment. One billion bird deaths a year due to building glazing and nighttime lighting is not sustainable. We ask for a favorable report on HB6 to stop these preventable bird collisions, increase the energy efficiency of our state buildings and save taxpayers money.

Respectfully,
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