



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 14, 2024

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations – HB 345 – Support.

Chair Korman, Vice - Chair Boyce, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the House Environment & Transportation Committee vote favorably for Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations – HB 345.

Requiring certain petitions to review the listing or unlisting of endangered or threatened species to contain certain information regarding the distribution, life and habitat needs of the species and relevant information about the status of a species; requiring the Secretary of Natural Resources to review and, if warranted, update certain regulations listing endangered or threatened species on or before July 1, 2026, and every 5 years thereafter; and altering the definitions of "fish" and "wildlife" for certain purposes.

This bill essentially outlines specific protocols for the Secretary of Natural Resources to follow so that Maryland can make informed decisions about the status of existing protected species as well as which additional species need the critical protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act has been an effective tool for ensuring the preservation of species whose numbers were dwindling to very dangerous numbers. Maryland Votes for Animals is committed to maintaining the strength and integrity of the ESA and its goal of protecting imperiled species and their habitats to maintain the biological diversity in our state and on our planet.

Thanks to Delegate Palakovich Carr for sponsoring HB 345. I urge the committee for a favorable report.