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Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 345 – Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species – Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations

Environment and Transportation Committee
February 14, 2024

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB345**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

House Bill 345 will require the Department of Natural Resources to review the endangered and threatened species list for the state and update regulations if deemed necessary in a timely manner. Additionally, this bill will allow an interested person to petition with evidence for a species to be considered endangered or threatened by the Department.

The language within this proposed bill is consistent with language within the Endangered Species Act and it includes some general updating to existing regulation to make our state consistent with federal policies. The current report of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species in Maryland comprises of “519 native Maryland animals that are among the least understood, the rarest, and the most in need of conservation efforts.¹” This report is an invaluable tool for conservation, preservation, and education of our communities and natural environments.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports protecting our state’s rare, threatened, and endangered species and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT ON HOUSE BILL 345**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

¹ Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service Natural Heritage Program. *List of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Animals of Maryland*. 2021.