



February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Chairman Marc Korman  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Landscape Industry Comments on HB 979: Agriculture - Invasive Plant Species - Regulation  
(Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act)**

The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) is the national trade organization representing the \$3.7 billion landscape industry employing over 35,000 employees in the state of Maryland. Member companies specialize in lawn care, landscape maintenance, tree care, irrigation, and water management. Landscape professionals throughout the nation work daily performing essential services to homes and businesses to maintain their landscapes, sustain the environment, and enhance and maintain healthy and safe green spaces.

We are writing to provide testimony on Maryland HB 979, which proposes regulations that could have a significant impact on growers and nurseries in our state. This bill, if enacted, would potentially subject cultivars to prohibition without adequate assessment, posing a serious concern for the livelihoods of those in the horticultural industry.

First, it's imperative to allow for thorough assessment before any cultivars are prohibited. Any decision to restrict or prohibit cultivars should be based on scientific evidence demonstrating their harmful or invasive nature. Rushing into such prohibitions without proper assessment could have detrimental effects on growers and nurseries, leading them to experience financial losses and disruptions in their operations.

Furthermore, we advocate for a compromise that allows sufficient time for the assessment of cultivars and for growers and nurseries to transition to alternative plants. Abrupt changes in regulations could pose significant challenges for businesses, particularly small-scale operations that may lack the resources to adapt quickly. Providing a reasonable transition period will enable growers and nurseries to adjust their practices accordingly and minimize potential adverse impacts on their businesses.

We urge the committee and bill sponsor to continue collaboration with stakeholders in developing regulations that strike a balance between environmental protection and the economic interests of growers and nurseries. Such collaboration is crucial in ensuring that any measures implemented are practical, effective, and fair.

In closing, we support efforts to safeguard Maryland's environment from harmful and invasive species, but we urge legislators to regulations that could disproportionately affect growers and nurseries. By working together with stakeholders and allowing for adequate assessment and transition periods, we can achieve a balanced approach that protects both our environment and the livelihoods of those in the horticultural industry.

Sincerely,

Terence Stovall

Terence Stovall  
Manager, State and Local Affairs

[terence@landscapeprofessionals.org](mailto:terence@landscapeprofessionals.org)