



P.O. Box 278
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Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

Testimony on: SB932 Pesticide and Pest Control – State-Owned Property – Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 18, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB932 because of its benefits to people, pollinators, other wildlife, and native plants.

Native plant pollinator habitats are expressly planted for the purpose of supporting our Maryland ecosystems and our agriculture. Excessive use of pesticides is one of the primary culprits in the global biodiversity crisis.¹ For example, within Maryland, there are 28 bee species that are rare, threatened, or endangered according to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, including the rusty-patched bumble bee.²

Many Americans are also aware of the stunning decline in our beloved Monarch butterflies, whose populations have dropped more than 80%.³ While loss of habitat is part of the cause, pesticide usage is another significant contributor to the decline.

Native plants are the keystone food for much of our wildlife, including existentially important native pollinators. Of the 100 crop species that supply 90% of human nutrition, over 70 require bee pollination.⁴ Many of our important crops rely on native bees, including squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, blueberries, cranberries, and sunflowers. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), in almost all crops, native bees are the primary pollinator, or they significantly supplement the activity of European honeybees.⁵

It makes sense for the Department of Agriculture to develop a model pesticide and pollinator habitat management plan to be implemented on State-owned and managed property, and to restrict application of those pesticides to qualified individuals. It is crucial that pesticide usage does not undermine public health or efforts to support native plants and pollinator habitats in Maryland.

We respectfully request a favorable report for SB932.

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1 Brondizio, J. et al. IPBES (2019): Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

2 Maryland Department of Natural Resources, List of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Animals of Maryland, November, 2023. https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/rte_Animal_List.pdf

3 Xerces Eastern Monarch Conservation <https://xerces.org/monarchs/eastern-monarch-conservation#:~:text=Monarch%20butterflies%20east%20of%20the,needed%20for%20the%20monarch's%20survival>.

4 Humans Must Change Behaviour to Save Bees, Vital for Food Production, March 10, 2011, United Nations UN News, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/03/368622>

5 USGS, What is the role of native bees in the United States? April 19, 2024 <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-role-native-bees-united-states>