

SB0317_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON SB#0317 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Natural Resources - Food Forests and Foraging Program – Establishment

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ SB#/0317, Natural Resources - Food Forests and Foraging Program - Establishment

This bill addresses establishing a Food Forests and Foraging Program on areas owned or managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Human food foraging in community forests offers extensive and expandable sources of food and high-quality nutrition that support chronic disease prevention and management and are underrepresented in US diets. Despite severe gaps in non-commercial “wild food” data, research in Syracuse, NY, identified substantial amounts of five key antioxidant phytochemicals in locally available, forageable foods with the potential to augment local dietary diversity and quality. Findings endorse the need for micro- and macro-nutrient research on an expanded range of forageable foods, community nutrition education on those foods, an expanded study on antioxidant phytochemical function, and the inclusion of forageables in the food system definition.¹

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has a website **Living off the Land in Maryland’s Forests**.² They state:

Foraging is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, take in scenic views and return home with some native delicacies for your kitchen! Always use caution when identifying foraging species as some mushrooms, for example, can be poisonous if ingested. A good ID book will help you identify the best the forest has to offer. As a responsible forager, a good rule of thumb is to leave at least 30% of what you found in the forest.

This bill defines "foraging" as harvesting plant materials, including seeds, nuts, mushrooms, roots, tubers, and berries for noncommercial personal consumption. The bill creates a responsible pathway to the implementation of a foraging program.

¹

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10647252/#:~:text=Human%20food%20foraging%20in%20community,are%20underrepresented%20in%20US%20diets.>

² <https://dnr.maryland.gov/cookbook/Pages/Living-off-the-Land-in-Marylands-Forests.aspx#:~:text=Foraging%20is%20a%20great%20way,the%20forest%20has%20to%20offer.>

It will govern the practice by requiring individuals who forage in a food forest to obtain a permit. This management function for foraging will require the Department to charge a permit application fee and establish a fee waiver process for individuals who demonstrate financial need. Monies collected will be allocated to establishing the Food Forests and Foraging Fund.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0317.