



Willard Office Building
1455 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004
202-627-6961
Executivedirector@americanloggerscouncil.com
www.americanloggerscouncil.com

February 28, 2025

Re: **Support** of SB946 – Endangered Species – Incidental Taking – Bats

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagen, and Members of the Education, Energy & Environment Committee,

I am the Executive Director of the American Loggers Council, a nonprofit trade association representing the timber industry in 45 states, including Maryland.

I submit this written testimony in support of SB946 / HB894 which allows for the Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) and other bat species to be included in the list of species in Maryland authorized to have a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and incidental take permit issued by the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. This legislation is necessary to ensure that conservations efforts are balanced with the needs of sustainable forest management.

The decline of the population of the NLEB is solely due to the White-Nose Syndrome, a fungal disease that spreads during winter hibernation in caves. Shutting down timber management activities during the roosting months (April – October) for the remote potential incident that a random bat may be impacted will do nothing to reduce the mortality of the NLEB. When these bats and pups return to the caves for hibernation, they will contract White-Nose Syndrome and die, regardless of the level of listing or forest management restrictions.

The Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan, representing the Department of Natural Resources in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, was prepared in 2023. This nearly 500-page document represents a comprehensive assessment of the issue and provides the framework and provisions to allow a balanced approach to habitat conservation and forest management activities. The report can be viewed at <https://widnr.widen.net/view/pdf/bdj6gyb66g/>

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed, with bipartisan support, a Congressional Review Act Resolution in 2023 nullifying the uplisting from Threatened to Endangered and downlisting the Endangered listing for the NLEB to Threatened. Although the CRA downlisting was vetoed by President Biden, there are expectations that the new Congress and Administration will downlist the NLEB to Threatened.



Willard Office Building
1455 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004
202-627-6961
Executivedirector@americanloggerscouncil.com
www.americanloggerscouncil.com

This action is a priority for the American Loggers Council and is included in the Road Map to Recovery. Therefore, on behalf of the American Loggers Council we strongly encourage you to support and pass **SB946** to allow Maryland the option and opportunity to responsibly develop an HCP for the Northern Long-Eared Bat, and other bat species as many other states have done.

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Dane
Scott Dane
Executive Director
American Loggers Council