



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

January 29, 2025

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 257 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Food Forests and Foraging Program – Establishment

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports the passage of HB 257 as it establishes a program that aligns with DNR’s mission to lead the state toward a resilient future and improve ecological, social, and economic outcomes for all communities. The “Food Forests and Foraging” program will establish locations on state lands where the public is permitted to harvest plant material for the purpose of consumption. This program will create legal means for foraging on state land and set up a dedicated fund in support of this program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HB 257 is an addition to Article – Natural Resources Section 5–2101 through 5–2104 under the new subtitle “Subtitle 21. Food Forests and Foraging Program.”

BILL EXPLANATION

HB 257 mandates the establishment of a “Food Forests and Foraging” program within DNR; requires the establishment of a permit process; and a special, nonlapsing fund in the Department for the implementation of the new program. The Bill also requires the establishment of a fee waiver process for individuals who demonstrate financial need.

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