



Hearing Date: March 13, 2025

Committee: **House Health and Economic Matters**

Written Testimony on: **HB0368 Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month**

Position: **Favorable**

Dear Chair Josephine A. Pena-Melnyk:

I am writing to you as president of Wild Ones Greater Baltimore to urge a favorable committee report for HB0368, which designates May as Maryland Native Plant Month. Wild Ones as an organization is a national network of people committed to healing the earth through native plants. Our core focus is to promote environmentally sound landscaping practices and preserve biodiversity through native-plant community restoration and education.

Today, we are faced with climate change and biodiversity loss that pose existential threats to all of humanity. According to the University of Maryland Extension, climate change is already causing significant impacts in Maryland. Marylanders face more intense storms, an increase in coastal and inland flooding, more frequent and longer heat waves, and an increase in the probability of summer drought. According to NOAA, Maryland is home to 3,190 miles of coastline – about 3.4% of the U.S. total. The EPA has noted that sea level is rising more in Maryland than in most coastal states because the land is sinking.

Native plants can help address the adverse effects of climate change. Native plants have deep roots that make them drought resistant, reduce soil erosion and flooding, filter pollutants from ground water, and increase rainwater infiltration. Native forests are the highest performers when it comes to sequestering carbon and managing watersheds. Maryland's native plants are our best option to sustain the abundance and diversity of the animals and insects we need to run our local ecosystem and help address the long-term effects of climate change.

Designating an annual commemorative Native Plant Month in Maryland will raise public awareness about the critical role plants play in mitigating climate change and supporting a healthy, sustainable environment. It also enhances the work of the Maryland Native Plants Program, which the legislature

passed in 2023 by creating a partnership between the University of Maryland Extension, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Native Plant Society to promote the sale and use of plants native to Maryland.

A positive report for HB0368 will cost nothing and creates no mandates. It's a win for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

**Amanda Wray**

President,

Wild Ones Greater Baltimore wildonesbaltimore@gmail.com

443-764-3244