

Testimony on: HB 368 *General Provision Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month*
Committee: Health and Government Operations
Hearing Date: March 13, 2025
Position: Support

Wild Ones Nation's Capital Region¹ supports this bill due to the urgent need to increase the use of native plants. Native plants help protect and restore biodiversity, improve air and water quality, and provide wildlife with quality food and shelter.

Overview. This bill supports important goals: rebuilding our damaged environment, educating the public, supporting business growth, and improving efficiencies.

Environment. Maryland suffers from a badly damaged ecosystem due to extensive use of lawns, pesticides, and non-native and invasive plants. Native plants are adapted to our conditions such that pesticides and watering are not needed for them to flourish. There is increasing use of native plants, but the portion remains miniscule.

Education. There is very little understanding of the importance of using native plants and the damage created by common gardening practices. Educational activities are desperately needed. Having an established native plant month will enable education leading to increased use of native plants.

Business Growth. The expansion of native plant landscaping is good for business, especially small businesses. There is a growing number of small nurseries and landscaping companies selling and using native plants. Increasing consumer and commercial demand will help these businesses thrive and enable new ones to form.

Efficiency. A consistent month for focus on native plants will improve efficiencies.

1. Benefits will be gained without the need for state funds.
2. State government will be freed from having to consider, discuss and take action each year.
3. Businesses and organizations will have the time needed to plan and advertise events.

Please vote in favor of this much needed bill, HB 368.

Marney Bruce
President
Wild Ones Nation's Capital Region

¹ Wild Ones, a nationwide nonprofit organization with local chapters throughout the country, promotes native landscapes through education, advocacy and collaborative action.