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Society of the United States and
Humane Society International

March 31, 2026

**Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
HB 1267, Patuxent Research Refuge and Beltsville Agricultural Research Center - Zoning
Classification (Protecting Patuxent Research Refuge Act)
FAVORABLE**

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

On behalf of our Maryland members and supporters, Humane World for Animals offers its support for HB 1267 to maintain zoning classifications that restrict the use of lands on the Patuxent Research Refuge to open space, reserved open space or other resource conservation uses and does not permit commercial, industrial or residential uses; and restricts the use of lands on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center to open space and reserved open space.

These protected land areas provide vital resources for Maryland's human inhabitants, as well as essential habitat for a magnificent array of wildlife.

Habitat loss and fragmentation pose an immediate and long-term threat to countless wildlife species. The U.S. human population is expected to grow to nearly 400 million by 2050, meaning more development, more deforestation and habitat degradation. A new long-term study finds that 3 billion birds, even common birds, have vanished in the U.S. and Canada.¹

In response, wildlife management professionals and scientists across the U.S. stress the importance of conserving and enhancing crucial habitats to ensure the continued health and wellbeing of wildlife. Ensuring ongoing protections from potentially damaging uses on these Maryland properties is an important part of this process.

Because of this, Humane World for Animals reiterates support for HB 1267 to maintain zoning classifications for the use of lands on the Patuxent Research Refuge and the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

Sincerely,

Stacey Volodin

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¹ Rosenberg KV, Dokter AM, Blancher PJ, Sauer JR, Smith AC, Smith PA, Stanton JC, Panjabi A, Helft L, Parr M, Marra PP. Decline of the North American avifauna. *Science*. 2019 Oct 4;366(6461):120-124. doi: 10.1126/science.aaw1313. Epub 2019 Sep 19. PMID: 31604313.