



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony in Support of SB667**  
**Natural Resources – Edible Forests and Foraging Program – Establishment**  
**Senator Kevin M. Harris**  
**February 17, 2026**

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

Food forests are cultivated areas that have food-bearing trees and plants, such as nut trees and berry bushes. A food forest combines the same layers found in a natural forest: root crops, ground covers, herbs, perennials, shrubs, vines, small trees, mid-size trees, and canopy trees. These layers create a rich, thriving, and resilient ecosystem that provides nutritious food for people to eat freely. Food forests are open and available to everyone. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has already piloted a Food Forest concept by planting its Edible Trail in White Marsh Park near Centreville and behind the City of Brunswick Food Bank in Frederick County.

Separately, foraging is where one goes into the wilderness and harvests plant life in the form of edible berries, mushrooms, herbs, etc. from the naturally occurring wild flora, as opposed to land that was specifically cultivated for human consumption. Foraging is a thriving practice across the country; however, it is currently illegal to forage on state land in Maryland.

With recommendations from the Department of Natural Resources, we requested amendments to make the bill a three-year pilot program limited to two foraging areas designated by DNR. The amendments also remove all permit requirements and add a reporting requirement at the end of the pilot to evaluate successes, challenges, and policy recommendations.

As amended, this bill will:

Establish a foraging pilot program within designated forageable areas established by the Department of Natural Resources. DNR would use this pilot to explore ways to the department could better engage with the public on the activity of foraging.

Any surplus funds collected from the Foraging program, DNR will be used to create cultivated food forest areas on state land, which will be open and accessible for the public to eat from freely.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report of SB667.