

Kerry Wixted
1058 Plum Creek Drive
Crownsville, MD 21032
Kwixted0@gmail.com

3/5/2026

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 0035 / HB 0173, which would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State Natural Science Museum.

As a lifelong Maryland resident and a biologist who began my career in Maryland in 2009, the Natural History Society of Maryland has played a meaningful role in my professional development. Early in my career, the Society provided opportunities for mentoring, networking, and professional growth that helped shape my path in public service.

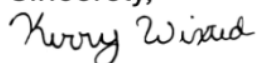
Beyond my personal experience, the Society serves as a vital hub for Maryland's natural history community. It connects professional scientists, students, and community members through education, field experiences, and mentorship opportunities. the support I received early in my career, I now strive to reciprocate by providing activities for the next generation of naturalists throughout the State.

The Society's longstanding museum collections are also an invaluable resource for research, conservation, and education. These collections help scientists gather information about species distributions, ecological change, and biodiversity. Such resources are irreplaceable and are critical for informing conservation and management decisions across the region, especially in the face of a changing climate. Also equally important is the joy of bringing nature to life with the museum's artifacts through its many outreach events throughout the year.

Designating the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State Natural Science Museum would appropriately recognize the Society's longstanding contributions to education, scientific research, and public engagement on behalf of Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to supporting science and natural history in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Kerry Wixted
Vegetation Ecologist
Writing in my personal capacity

March 06, 2026

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support
HB 0173 (House Bill) Support

March 12, 2026

March 17, 2026

Daniel Dean

Vice President/Research Chair – Marshy Point Nature Center Council

District 5 Representative – Landmarks Preservation Commission, Baltimore County

9017 Old Harford Rd
Parkville, MD 21234

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair

Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair

House Government, Labor and Elections Committee

145 Lowe House Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman, and Delegate Wells,

I write in support of SB0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and its companion bill HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen). These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland (referred to as NHSM) as the State's official natural science museum.

The NHSM has been the long-standing organization in Baltimore County with a focus that benefits all of Maryland through their experience and knowledge. Our county has little representation compared to others, but has the resources for growth through outreach. The volunteers who provide education for those in the community and open access to this knowledge deserve to be recognized for these efforts.

I currently represent District 5 in Baltimore County as an appointed position from David Marks, Councilman, on the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am also the Vice President and Research Chair for the Marshy Point Nature Center Council which

supports a local county park in the Middle River area. I have volunteered my time in these positions and to the NHSM through presentations to spread the word of history and its relation to the environment. I support the promotion of archaeology and have been able to attend presentations from state entities, hosted by the NHSM.

The NHSM holds a large collection and the resources to take on the role of the official state designation. The exhibits are fresh and enticing to a new generation. Each time I visited, I felt like there was more to discover. Many who visit are novices with interests in hobbies. The NHSM has provided outlets and direction towards appropriate channels to guide those who wish to partake in these hobbies, such as archaeology, by promoting the state entities which benefit the whole of Maryland vs. private only collections. The NHSM has bridged the gap towards open knowledge and ease of access to those who may otherwise not gain these gifts.

I hope you consider the official designation through the support of these bills. Maryland needs the Natural History Society Museum as its representative.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Dean', with a stylized, cursive script.

Daniel Dean

Vice President/Research Chair – Marshy Point Nature Center Council
District 5 Representative – Landmarks Preservation Commission, Baltimore County

SB 0035 Senate Bill Support March 12 2026
HB 0173 House Bill Support March 17 2026

Jacob Jackson
Environmental Filmmaker and Conservationist Herp Hero Wildlife Foundation
Randallstown MD 21133

Senator Brian J Feldman Chair
Senate Education Energy and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells Chair
House Government Labor and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman and Delegate Wells,

I write in strong support of SB0035 and its companion bill HB0173 to designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the official state natural history museum. As a Maryland based herpetologist conservationist and environmental storyteller, I have seen firsthand how the Natural History Society of Maryland connects people to the landscapes species and scientific knowledge that make our state unique.

I am an environmental filmmaker wildlife professional and founder of the Herp Hero Wildlife Foundation. Much of my work focuses on bringing people into direct relationship with nature especially through the lens of reptiles and amphibians which are often overlooked yet critical indicators of ecosystem health. Through collaboration with NHSM I have helped bring community members out to natural areas across Maryland to look for and study native turtles frogs salamanders and snakes while documenting these experiences through photography and video so more people can see the pathways into science conservation and field work.

One moment that stands out to me was during a field outing where a young participant who had never held a turtle before gently observed a native species while learning from NHSM educators about habitat pressures and health monitoring. Watching that curiosity turn into respect and excitement reminded me why spaces like NHSM matter so deeply. They create real connections between people and the natural world that cannot be replicated in a classroom alone.

My interactions with NHSM have also included working alongside scholars and educators who teach about turtle health frog monitoring and the importance of archival data that tracks changes in herp populations over time. Their collections and expertise provide invaluable context for understanding how Maryland's ecosystems are shifting and how we can respond with informed conservation strategies.

What makes the Natural History Society of Maryland truly special is its ability to bridge research education and community engagement. From preserving specimens and historical records to hosting programs that invite the public into scientific discovery NHSM serves as a living resource that strengthens environmental literacy across our state. It is a place where future biologists land managers photographers and conservation advocates can see themselves reflected in the work.

Designating NHSM as the official state natural history museum would ensure long term support for these efforts while elevating Maryland's commitment to science education biodiversity conservation and public engagement. It would protect irreplaceable collections provide a central hub for research and inspire new generations to pursue careers and volunteer opportunities in environmental fields.

Maryland deserves an official natural history museum that reflects both the richness of our ecosystems and the dedication of those working to understand and protect them. I respectfully urge you to support these bills and help secure a strong future for natural history in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacob Jackson
Herp Hero Wildlife Foundation



www.lassahnfuneralhomes.com

March 3, 2026

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) – Support – March 12, 2026

HB 0173 (House Bill) – Support – March 17, 2026

To Senator Brian J. Feldman and Delegate Melissa Wells,

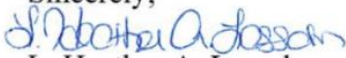
I represent Lassahn Funeral Home, Inc. and E.F. Lassahn Funeral Home, P.A., a long-standing, family-owned business that has proudly served the Overlea and Kingsville communities for six generations, and write in strong support of SB0035 and its companion bill HB 0173. These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State's official natural science museum.

Maryland currently does not have a state natural history museum. The Natural History Society of Maryland has effectively fulfilled this role for nearly a century, and the time has come to formally recognize the organization as Maryland's official natural science museum. Doing so will help protect irreplaceable scientific collections, support important research, and provide meaningful educational opportunities that highlight Maryland's role in our planet's natural history.

For many years, the Natural History Society of Maryland has served as a responsible steward of our state's natural heritage by preserving significant collections, offering valuable educational programming, and connecting people of all ages to the biodiversity and scientific importance of our region. Official state recognition would strengthen these efforts, expand public engagement, and help ensure the long-term preservation of Maryland's natural history resources.

The Natural History Society of Maryland resides in the Overlea community, as does my business, and it has been an important partner in the continued growth, development, and revitalization of our community. Our family-owned business strongly supports this name change.

Sincerely,


L. Heather A. Lassahn

Lassahn Funeral Home, Inc.
7401 Belair Road
Baltimore, MD 21236
410-665-2000

E. F. Lassahn Funeral Home, P.A.
11750 Belair Road
Kingsville, MD 21087
410-592-6100

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support
HB 0173 (House Bill) Support

March 12, 2026

March 17, 2026

Pamela S McNutt
1605 Bayside Drive
Chester, MD 21619

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman, and Delegate Wells,

I write in support of SB0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and its companion bill HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen). These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State's official natural science museum.

I love the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) and have attended several of their events. Looking for eagles at Loch Raven, learning and searching for skunk cabbage, discovering mushrooms out in their environment, taking a trip to Hart-Miller island and learning the impact of water in the Chesapeake Bay, and many more educational zoom learnings and outings. All ages attend these events and the joy of learning is obvious.

There are new events scheduled all the time and it's the only place I know to get involved with Maryland's natural history. The staff and leaders in the field are experts and passionate about teaching. Their joy is infectious and encourages us to learn more.

It's important to educate and protect Maryland's natural history. The NHSM and their collections are critical to provide these services to the community.

Your approval will continue to inspire and educate the community about our natural sciences. Your approval will ensure we keep the valuable collections and continue the education and research to keep our community connected with Maryland's science literacy.

We currently do not have a state natural history museum. NHSM has been there for the community filling that role for a very long time. I highly support making the NHSM an official museum to protect the collections, to continue the research, and to educate our community about our natural history.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela McNutt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pamela" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "McNutt".

Pam McNutt

Citizen of Maryland and member of the NHSM since 2022



SB 0035 (Senate Bill) – Support
March 12, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB 0173 (House Bill) – Support
March 17, 2026

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor & Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman and Delegate Wells:

On behalf of the Chesapeake Gateway Chamber of Commerce, I write in strong support of SB 0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen), which would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) as the State's official natural science museum.

NHSM is a vital steward of Maryland's natural heritage and an important economic and community asset for eastern Baltimore County. Official designation will strengthen its ability to preserve irreplaceable collections while expanding its impact in education, tourism, and regional revitalization.

The Chamber has seen firsthand the positive impact the museum and its visitors have had in Overlea and the surrounding communities, supporting local restaurants, retailers, and service providers. It is an important destination for students and families, offering hands-on learning experiences that promote science literacy and inspire interest in STEM careers. As a growing tourism attraction for Baltimore County, NHSM enhances both the economic vitality and cultural identity of our region.

In its newly renovated space, NHSM will showcase hundreds of thousands of specimens documenting Maryland's geology, paleontology, botany, and zoology, and offer onsite and offsite hundreds of educational programs annually. Its knowledgeable staff and volunteers provide lectures, tours, field experiences, and youth programming that connect Marylanders directly with the state's natural history.

Maryland does not currently have an officially designated state natural history museum. The Natural History Society of Maryland has effectively fulfilled that role for decades. Formal designation will establish a recognized central repository for the state's natural history collections, strengthen research and educational collaboration, and ensure long-term preservation of these invaluable resources.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 0035 and HB 0173.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Kihn
President
Chesapeake Gateway Chamber of Commerce

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support March 12, 2026
HB 0173 (House Bill) Support March 17, 2026

Michele Cotton & Alan Lee
20A Tree Farm Ct
Glen Arm, MD 21057

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman and Delegate Wells:

We are writing to support SB 0035 and its companion bill HB 0173 designating the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) as the State's official natural history museum.

The NHSM is the appropriate choice because it has an extensive collection of Maryland natural history and paleontology specimens accrued over the nearly one hundred years of its existence. Further, its small but impressive museum has been serving the region for many years through its exhibits, lectures, and events. The NHSM also supports science education in Maryland schools, such as by providing teachers with elaborate "kits" of Maryland fossils.

We have enjoyed going to the NHSM museum to look at the exhibits, hear lectures by experts, and engage in a wide variety of activities around natural history, including book sales, arts and crafts, and the annual Shark Fest. The NHSM also organizes field trips focused on nature, wildlife, and fossils, some of which we have also participated in.

The NHSM has long served as the unofficial center for natural history in Maryland. It's amazing what impressive things its knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers and staff have been able to do with minimal resources. It should finally be recognized for how much it has contributed – and will continue to contribute – to the many Marylanders who care about our natural history.

Sincerely,
Michele Cotton and Alan Lee



Keystone Natural History Preservation Foundation



19 Shoreview Lane, Delta, Pennsylvania 17314

February, 26, 2026

Dean Lee Evans, Pennsylvania Master Naturalist
Founder, Keystone Natural History Preservation Foundation
Delta, Pennsylvania, 17314

RE: SB 0035 March 12, 2026, HB 0173 March 17, 2026

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman, and Delegate Wells,

I write in support of SB0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and its companion bill HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen). These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) as the State's official natural science museum.

I was a naturalist/trail guide at Oregon Ridge Nature Center in Baltimore County and science teacher's assistant with the Baltimore City School System. When I founded my educational science foundation in 2006, continuing education became a must and the NHSM has been the preeminent institution I have turned to time and time again for education in the natural sciences.

NHSM provides classes and education on a plethora of natural history subjects that not only reaches the Baltimore area, but well beyond its borders! I have met individuals that have several hours just to attend NHSM events.

NHSM has become even more special to me lately as I finished the Master Naturalist program in Pennsylvania in October 2025. As a master naturalist, I required to maintain a specific number of advanced training hours and there is one institution I have turned to time and time again - NHSM.

Designating NHSM as Maryland's state's official natural history museum is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity before the Maryland State Legislature and I cannot emphasize the importance of this action. Now is the time to make NHSM an official museum to protect irreplaceable collections for research and educate people about Maryland's important role in our planet's history.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

Dean Lee Evans, founder, Keystone NHPF

Overlea

a Charming Baltimore Neighborhood



SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support March 12, 2026
HB 0173 (House Bill) Support March 17, 2026

To Senator Brian J Feldman, Delegate Melissa Wells,

I represent the Overlea Community Association and write in strong support of SB0035 and its companion bill HB 0173. These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State's official natural science museum.

Maryland does not have a state natural history museum. The Natural History Society of Maryland has been filling this role for nearly a century. Now is the time to make NHSM an official Maryland museum to protect irreplaceable collections for research and educate people about Maryland's important role in our planet's history.

NHSM has served as a trusted steward of Maryland's natural heritage, preserving collections, providing educational programming, and connecting communities to the rich biodiversity of our region. Official state recognition would strengthen these efforts, expand opportunities for public engagement, and help ensure the long-term preservation of Maryland's natural history resources.

The Natural History Society of Maryland resides in the Overlea Community and is an integral partner to our successful community development and revitalization efforts. Overlea is honored to have such an esteemed institution in our community. We look forward to this important name change and continued commitment to the state of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Martin Nibali, President

Overlea Community Association

Overlea Community Association

P.O. Box 18895, Baltimore, MD 21206 ~ www.overlearocks.org ~ president@overleasonline.org

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support.

March 12, 2026

HB 0173 (House Bill) Support
2026

March 17,

Jay Hilgartner
2309 Crest Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21209

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman, and Delegate Wells,

I am writing in support of SB0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and its companion bill HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen). These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State's official natural science museum.

I strongly support these actions because there are no other collections and exhibits located in our state devoted specifically to the natural history of Maryland. The wonderful Smithsonian is close by in Washington, D.C., of course, but it is a museum devoted to America in general and the entire planet. The terrific Maryland Science Center does have some local fossils but it is focused on teaching the sciences in general from Newton to NASA, not specifically on preserving and educating our citizens on the natural history of Maryland. The NHSM is devoted to Maryland's fascinating natural history from incredibly ancient geology (including 500 million year old blue-green algae fossils) from western Maryland, to the more recent 15 million-year-old shark fossils of Calvert Cliffs, to the incredible Chesapeake Bay meteor impact crater, to the current botany, bird, mammal, & marine life of Maryland's forests, Chesapeake Bay, and the Eastern Shore.

As a former television meteorologist (in Kansas, Arkansas, & Florida) who grew up in Owings Mills, retired and am now back living in my home state, I am a huge fan of the Natural History Society of Maryland. You should see their collections department! They have hundreds of thousands of specimens highlighting Maryland's diverse natural history, with more added all the time. With a small staff and expert volunteers, the NHSM manages to offer each year numerous programs, field trips, and lectures from experts in their field.

Your approval will provide an official collections facility for Maryland's natural history collections, create a central location for Maryland natural sciences education and research, and will help to

expand science literacy in Maryland. Incidentally, but importantly, it will also provide an economic engine for the revitalization of the Overlea, Parkville, and Hillendale communities.

Maryland does not have an official state natural history museum. The Natural History Society of Maryland has been filling that role unofficially for nearly a century. Please support SB 0035 and HB 0173 to educate the public about our state's fascinating natural history and its important role in the history of our planet.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Hilgartner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Jay Hilgartner
410-900-6857

SB 0035 Support
HB 0173 Support

March 12, 2026
March 17, 2026

Kathy Bartolomeo
[15 Laurel Hill Rd.](#)
[Unit R](#) ,
Greenbelt, Md. 20770

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor and Elections Committee

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman, and Delegate Wells,

I write in support of SB0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and its companion bill HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen). These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland as the State's official natural science museum.

This organization has wonderful zoom meetings, tours of natural places and discussion on history that reach people

of all ages. The offering by the Natural History Society is wide, from fossils, to rocks, salamanders, buildings, predatory birds.

NHSM is critical to the revitalization of the Overlea,

Parkville and Hillandale communities and the care and protection of Maryland's natural history collections. I am a Marylander that enjoys learning about nature, science and love history.

Though it is a far drive for me, the zoom meetings show a wider world to me.

The speakers are wonderful and varied. 300 programs every year presented, including in-person lectures and tours, field trips throughout Maryland, and online activities.) It would be in the interest of Maryland to designate this organization as our State Museum seeing as they provide such wonderful experiences to people.

Your approval will provide a collections facility for the state's irreplaceable natural history collections, create a central location for natural science education and research, expand science literacy in Maryland, and offer an economic engine for the community. A central location will foster collaboration between individuals and organizations that don't usually have the opportunity to connect with one another.)

I support this bill and hope that you will as well. What a treasure it would be to have Maryland designate a state natural history museum.

For nearly a century, NHSM has worked hard to educate and support the sciences. Now with so much history and research in jeopardy, it is time to make NHSM an official museum to protect

irreplaceable collections for research and educate people about Maryland's important role in our planet's history.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,
Kathy Bartolomeo
Greenbelt, Md.

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support
HB 0173 (House Bill) Support

March 12, 2026
March 17, 2026

Stephen P. Panossian
2741 Sweet Clover Court
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Senator Brian J Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Feldman, and Delegate Wells,

I am Maryland resident Stephen Panossian and I write to you in support of SB0035 (sponsored by Senator Jackson) and its companion bill HB 0173 (sponsored by Delegate Allen). These bills would designate the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) as the State's official natural science museum. I support this action strongly because NHSM will serve both as a curator of Maryland's nature legacy to future generations of residents and students, and as a valuable source of reference to scientists predicting Maryland's ecological future based on its natural history records and samples.

I am an environmental science technician with over a dozen years of experience working and volunteering in the woodlands of the DC/MD/VA region (formerly with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and currently with the Fairfax County Health Department and Nature Forward). NHSM not only offers me the opportunity to reinforce what I have studied and experienced, and socialize with other natural science enthusiasts, but also to learn and experience aspects of Maryland's biomes new to me, through thousands of specimens on exhibit (see Figure 1), and over 300 webinars, classes, and field trips annually.

I grew up in New York City, and one of my favorite activities was visiting the American Museum of Natural History. Seeing exhibits and attending classes made an indelible impression on me, and I knew that somehow, I would be a scientist when I grew up. Supporting NHSM will ensure this Maryland scientific institution continues to exist and to inspire future generations of scientists.

SB 0035 (Senate Bill) Support
HB 0173 (House Bill) Support

March 12, 2026
March 17, 2026

Consider the diversity of plant life and wildlife in our great state, from the Eastern shore along the Atlantic Ocean, to the banks of the Chesapeake Bay, across to the Appalachian Mountains in Western Maryland. Now consider the northward and southward urban sprawl along Interstate 95 that threatens all these natural resources. Thus, your approval of this pending legislation will provide a collections facility for our state's irreplaceable natural history collections, create a central location for natural science education and research, expand science literacy in Maryland, and offer an economic engine for NHSM's neighborhood. Furthermore, as a central location, NHSM will foster collaboration among students, scientists, and organizations that do not usually connect.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support for your pending legislation.

Sincerely,



Stephen P. Panossian



Fig. 1. Here I am at NHSM's Mammoth exhibit in 2024.