

**Testimony on: SB 229 General Provisions - Commemorative Month -
Maryland Native Plant Month**

Committee: Energy, Education and Environment

Hearing Date: : March 12, 2026

Position: Support

Chairman Brian Feldman, Vice Chairman Cheryl Kagan, and Honorable Members of the Committee

I have lived in Maryland for 23 years, volunteer in my county's Parks Department (a) Weed Warrior program (removing invasive plants from county property) and (b) native plant gardening.

Please support this bill as it provides a remarkable opportunity for business development with no cost to the State. Additionally, it facilitates economic growth while addressing the urgent need to increase native planting in our State.

Overview. This bill supports important goals: expanding business opportunities, rebuilding our damaged environment, educating the public, and improving State operating efficiencies.

Business Growth. The expansion of native plant landscaping is good for businesses of all sizes. There is an increasing number of nurseries and landscaping companies selling and using native plants. Having an established month will enable them to plan, advertise, and stock ahead of time. Increasing consumer and commercial demand will help these businesses thrive and encourage new ones to form. Notably, at no cost to the State.

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 ongoing watering are not needed for them to flourish. There is increasing use of native plants, but the percentage of natives 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 educational activities leading to increased use of native plants.

State Operational Efficiency. Staff will no longer need to create the paperwork each year, and the governor will no longer need to sign an annual proclamation.

Please pass this economic development, environmental bill. It's a win for all.

Sincerely,



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