



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 667

Natural Resources – Edible Forests and Foraging Program – Establishment

Date: February 17, 2026

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Gussie Maguire,
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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 667**, which creates an Edible Forests and Food Foraging Program within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Edible forests and foraging practices exist at a crucial junction of conservation and environmental and food justice. Planting trees on state land to produce edible fruit for visitors to enjoy combines the benefits of planting trees—soil stabilization, carbon sequestration, habitat establishment, and temperature mitigation, among others—with access to fresh food and meaningful interactions with the natural world.

Additionally, as foraging has become a more popular hobby, establishing a formal permit program protects species from overharvest. The fee waiver for individuals in need offsets concerns about equity: laws restricting and banning foraging have historically excluded marginalized communities¹. We appreciate the provision allowing the Department to require an orientation or course on foraging practices, as inexperienced individuals may unintentionally infringe upon others' ability to enjoy the resources by taking excessively or damaging plants and fungi.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 667.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

¹ The Sierra Club: [Wild Food For All](#)

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