

**SB 229 - CBF - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Allison Colden

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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## Senate Bill 229

### General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month

**Date:** March 12, 2026

**To:** Education, Energy, & Environment Committee

**Position:** **FAVORABLE**

**From:** Matt Stegman,  
MD Staff Attorney

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 229** which would require the Governor to proclaim each May Native Plant Month in Maryland. Such proclamations will provide a great opportunity to educate Marylanders about the numerous ecological benefits of native plant species.

Native plants of Maryland are not only beautiful and diverse, but provide a host of ecological services from support of pollinators, improvement of soil health, fish and wildlife habitats, and resilience to climate change. From the water quality perspective, native plants and their adaptations to Maryland's weather patterns are better at absorbing excessive rainfall volumes and storing water underground for eventual release to surface streams than non-native plants. We call this the "green sponge" effect of our landscape. Use of native plants in urban settings can be even more important as they provide cooling shade and treatment of polluted runoff as well as a sense of connection to the natural world. Ecological science supports the maintenance of native plant cover as the best defense against the establishment of invasive species, especially along shorelines and wetlands throughout the Bay watershed.

Native plants on land also support healthy habitats for submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) to thrive. Bay grasses absorb excess nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, which helps prevent harmful algae blooms and improves water quality. Additionally, underwater grasses provide habitat for economically and ecologically important animal species like [blue crabs](#), juvenile [striped bass](#), and other aquatic life. Migrating waterfowl, including ducks and geese, rely on them for food. Expanding SAV beds in throughout the Bay is one of the key goals in the newest iteration of the interstate Chesapeake Bay Agreement adopted last year.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 229.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

**SB\_0229\_R\_JENKINS\_FAV\_Native Plant Month.pdf**

Uploaded by: barbara johnson

Position: FAV



March 5, 2026

**Maryland Native Plant Month (SB0229)**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Blue Water Baltimore's mission is to restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams, and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities. A core part of our work is operating the Herring Run Nursery, which specializes in plants native to Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. **We write today in support of establishing May as Maryland Native Plant Month (SB0229).**

Our non-profit Nursery offers more than 250 native species of trees, shrubs, vines, flowers, and more to retail and wholesale customers alike. Native plants help reduce stormwater pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay by reducing nutrient runoff and requiring fewer chemical inputs than non-native plants. Native plants have deeper root systems than non-natives and are better at stabilizing soils and preventing sediment runoff. Native plants provide critical habitat and food for butterflies, birds, and pollinators. Ecosystem health is increasingly important with rising concerns over climate change and declining pollinator populations. Native plants are an integral part of a healthy and functioning ecosystem.

For more than 15 years, our nursery staff has been engaging and educating Baltimore communities about the many benefits and uses of our indigenous plants. In 2023, I was proud to represent Blue Water Baltimore and offer our support and testimony in favor of the Maryland Native Plant Program. I have been a member of the Maryland Native Plant Program commission since that legislation was passed. An extremely important aspect of the legislation, and a focus of the commission, has been educating the public about native plants. HB 0368 is a natural extension of this education, with the designation of May as Maryland Native Plant Month providing a much more extended spotlight on Maryland native plants.

By designating an entire month to plants indigenous to Maryland, HB 0368 creates an opportunity within the horticulture industry for more sustained, focused, and fun programs educating residents about native plants. The increased interest in native plants will provide the economic benefit of increased spring sales, but even more importantly will engage Marylanders in habits and practices that are beautiful and of benefit to us and our ecosystem.

We urge a favorable report on SB 0229.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Jenkins

Rob Jenkins  
Herring Run Nursery Manager  
Blue Water Baltimore

# **MDNativePlantMonth\_SB229.pdf**

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV



# Maryland Native Plant Month Act

Sponsors Delegate Dana Stein and Senator Benjamin Brooks

HB 0217 SB 0229

Permanently designating every May as Maryland Native Plant Month is an **economic driver** for local businesses and an **environmental win** for biodiversity and our declining ecosystems. Encouraging communities and home owners to plant native trees and plants turns a simple idea into big impact - at **zero cost** to taxpayers. Here's how it works:

## Maryland Jobs, Economic Growth & Volunteer Engagement

- **Boosts Local Economy:** Raising awareness of the benefits and importance of native plants will drive demand at wholesale & retail nurseries and garden centers and directly supports the **Dept of Agriculture's Maryland's Best Native Plant Certified Growers Program**;
- **Businesses Certainty:** Predictability of a permanent, recurring month - at the height of planting season - gives growers, retail nurseries, landscapers, design firms & related businesses the confidence needed to hire staff, invest in inventory, and plan promotions to meet growing demand;
- **Promotes Green Jobs & Workforce Development:** supports Maryland's Green Economy and environmental stewardship initiatives - encouraging careers in horticulture, ecological restoration, Green Stormwater Infrastructure & Best Management Practices (nature-based climate solution tools).  
Examples: **Maryland Climate Crew Network, MarylandCorps Service Year Options, & Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps initiatives**;
- **Leverages Value of State-Volunteer Partnerships:** MD volunteers contribute an average value of \$35.53/hr\* in labor. Peak season planting window amplifies the impact of this volunteer workforce saving our state millions of dollars every year. Examples: **DNR's Tree-Mendous Maryland, MD Environmental Trust Land Stewards, & Roots for Resilience** - an Eastern Shore climate adaptation initiative;
- **Community Action:** provides lead time needed to plan engaging, fun & educational activities. Encourages private & community groups to plant pollinator & rain gardens, stream tree buffers, invasive removal projects, community stream cleanups and more.

## Agriculture, Tourism, Clean Waters & Thriving Ecosystems

- **Pollinators & Agriculture:** native bees & pollinators need MD native plants for their food, shelter and habitat. Pollinators are essential to the production of many food crops and loss of native plant habitat is contributing to significant pollinator decline. Planting more natives is the only way to reverse this trend.
- **Maryland waterways & Chesapeake Bay:** the deep & massive fibrous root systems of natives filter excess nutrient & sediment runoff before it enters our waters. Run-off is the biggest source of pollution and threat to our Bay heritage; it can fuel toxic algae blooms & dead zones that smother underwater seagrasses, habitat, fish, blue crabs & all aquatic life. These conditions also **limit recreational water activities**, increase beach closings and necessitate **Unsafe Water Advisories**. To preserve our iconic **\$600M Seafood & \$21B tourism sector**, we need to educate the public. **Awareness** is the first step to changing public behavior;
- **Nature-based modern tools:** natives are foundational to evolving Best Management Practices (BMPs) & Green Stormwater Infrastructure. These nature based practices control erosion, improve soil health, absorb stormwater, reduce costly flood damage, recharge groundwater, & capture CO2 and other air pollutants that harm human health.



# Maryland Native Plant Month Act

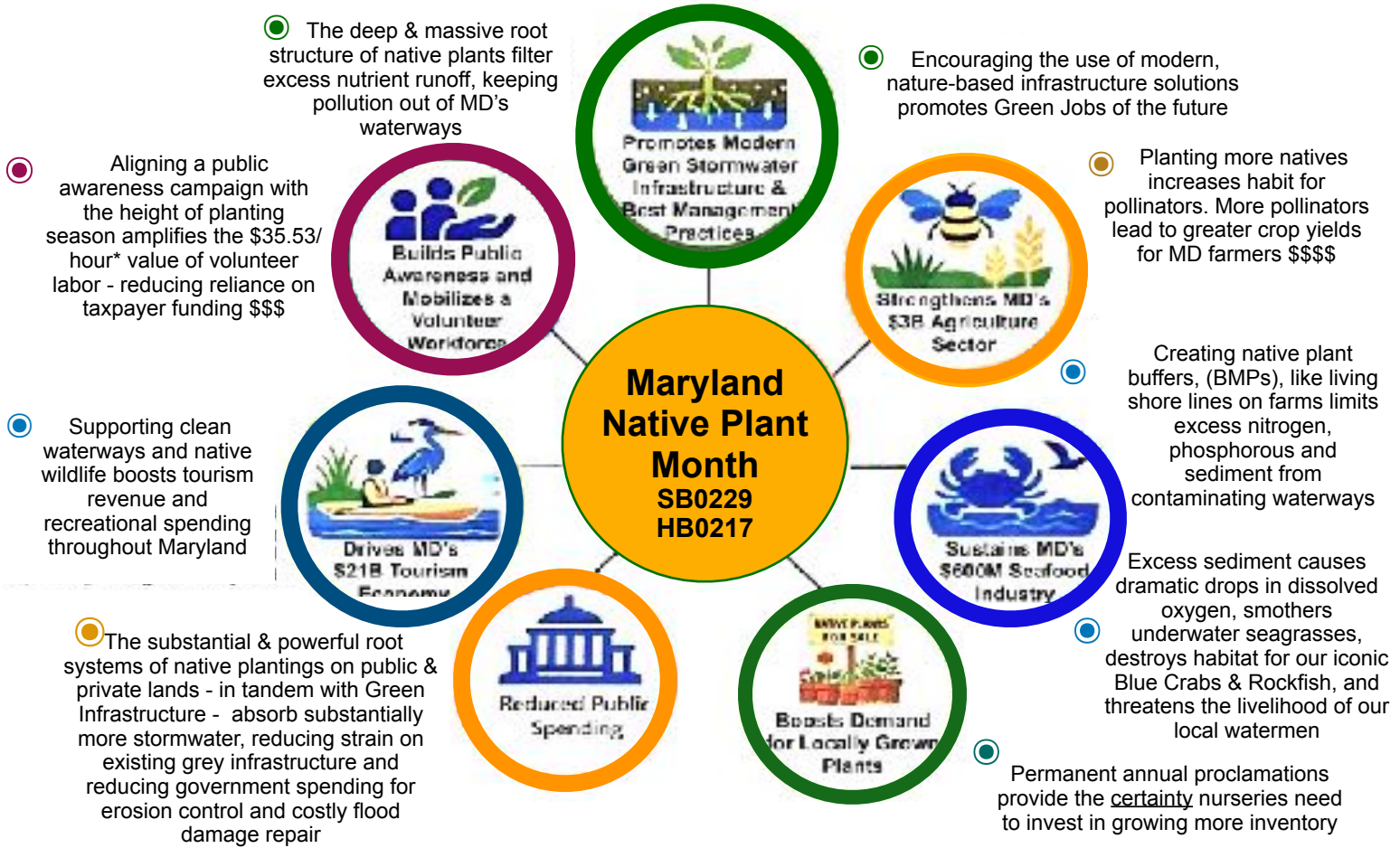
Sponsors Delegate Dana Stein and Senator Benjamin Brooks

HB 0217 SB 0229

**National Momentum:** launched in 2022, a program to establish a **Native Plant Awareness Month** in every state and the District of Columbia was initiated by The Garden Club of America. As of 2025, 44 states and DC observed a native plant month proclamation with **11 states converting it to a permanent law.**

**We ask that Maryland join these states.**

## The Superpowers of Native Plants



# **SB229\_Brooks.pdf**

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

**BENJAMIN BROOKS**  
*Legislative District 10*  
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee  
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal  
Service Program Workgroup



**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 229**  
**General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
March 12, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of this committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of SB 229, Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month. The purpose of this bill is to designate May as Native Plant Month.

While this bill designates a commemorative month, its purpose is far more substantive than recognition alone. SB 229 creates an opportunity to educate Marylanders about the environmental, agricultural, and economic benefits of native plants and the role they play in the health of our state's ecosystems.

In 2023, the General Assembly enacted legislation establishing the State's Native Plant Program, recognizing the ecological and environmental value of incorporating native plants into landscaping, conservation, and restoration efforts. Since that time, the Governor has also designated May as Native Plant Month through executive order, helping to raise awareness about the importance of native plants and their role in supporting Maryland's ecosystems. SB 229 builds upon those efforts by establishing this recognition in statute, ensuring that this important focus on education and awareness becomes a lasting commitment.

Native plants are uniquely adapted to Maryland's climate, soils, and wildlife. Because of this, they require less water, fewer chemical inputs, and less maintenance than non-native species. For homeowners, municipalities, and land managers, that means reduced landscaping costs and more sustainable land management practices.

Native plants are also foundational to Maryland's agricultural and natural resource economy. They support pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects that are essential to crop production. Without healthy pollinator populations, many of the crops grown across Maryland would face significant challenges.

Beyond agriculture, native plants strengthen biodiversity, improve soil health, help manage stormwater, and contribute to the restoration of critical habitats throughout our state. As

Maryland continues to address environmental challenges, including climate resilience and water quality, the use of native plants is an important, practical tool.

This bill also supports education and community engagement. A designated Native Plant Month provides a platform for schools, local governments, conservation groups, nurseries, and garden centers to highlight the value of native plants and encourage Marylanders to incorporate them into landscapes, parks, and restoration projects.

In doing so, SB 229 can help expand demand for native plants, supporting local nurseries and growers while advancing Maryland's environmental goals.

For these reasons, SB 229 is more than a symbolic designation. It is a simple but meaningful step toward strengthening environmental stewardship, supporting agriculture, and raising awareness about the natural resources that sustain our state.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 229.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks

**SB229\_BryanJombo\_FAV\_EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wilson

Position: FAV

Date: 2/18/2026

Hello there my name is Bryan Jombo I am a 7th grader from Loch Raven Technical Academy and I am a part of Green Club. I greatly support Bill SB229 about the month of May being the national native plants month.

Native plants are extremely important to the environment and ecosystem because they support different species of animals like for example the monarch butterfly. The monarch butterfly is beautiful but can only eat a single type of native plant called the milkweed. This means that if there isn't enough milkweed then the population of monarch butterflies drops.



Native plants are also especially good and have strong and deep roots. This is important because it holds ground in place. This helps make sure that landslides won't happen. This is because the loose ground that would be used in a landslide is instead set in by the roots of the native plants; it also conserves water which non-native plants can't because their roots aren't big or strong enough.

So, with those reasons this is why I think that May, which is also conveniently my birthday month, should be the native plants month.

Bryan Jombo

**SB229\_LochRaven\_FAV\_EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wilson

Position: FAV

FROM: Romel Marmolejos

DATE: 1/21/26

SUBJECT: Support for May as Native Plant Month

My name is Romel Marmolejos, and I am a 6th grade student at Loch Raven Technical Academy. I am writing to strongly support the bill SB229 about May being Native Plant Month.

PHOTO 1: Close-up of a native plant



*Figure 1: Bee Balm blooming in Eastern North America, essential for local pollinators.*

Native plants are very important to the environment. Many insects have not evolved to be able to eat non-native plants. The relationship between flora and fauna are very specialized and cannot be replaced with non-native plants. Native plants provide food

and shelter to native wildlife. If humans keep planting non-native plants, the insects won't have food nor shelter. This means they will most likely die and ruin the ecological balance.

PHOTO 2: A beautiful, established native plant garden.



Figure 2: A flourishing native plant garden demonstrating biodiversity and aesthetic appeal.

Native plants are the foundation of a healthy food web. Designating this month will help educate our community to plant more native plants.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill SB229.

Sincerely,

Romel Marmolejos

**SB229\_MDNativePlantMonth868Supporters.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wilson

Position: FAV

March 12, 2026

Dear Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

**We urge you to support SB229 designating the month of May as Maryland Native Plant Month—a bipartisan, no-cost, no-mandate initiative that strengthens our environment, economy, and communities.**

### **Why It Matters Now**

Maryland faces urgent environmental challenges: habitat loss, invasive species, polluted runoff, and climate change. Native plants are a simple, sustainable solution:

- **Protect Waterways:** Deep roots prevent erosion and polluting stormwater runoff, safeguarding streams, the Chesapeake Bay, and Maryland's famous native Blue Crabs and Rockfish.
- **Support Pollinators & Agriculture:** Native plants feed and provide necessary habitat for bees, butterflies, and insects essential to the production of crops grown for human consumption.
- **Preserve Biodiversity:** Natives sustain our wildlife, local ecosystems and can help reverse the decline of imperiled species like the endangered Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly, our state insect.
- **High Impact, No Cost**

A formal Native Plant Month would boost local businesses—nurseries, landscapers, farmers—and empower education and outreach efforts statewide. Unlike one-time proclamations, legislation ensures lasting impact without spending public funds or adding mandates. By simply choosing to plant a native plant, nearly anyone can help our environment.

We invite individuals and organizations across Maryland to sign this letter in support. Let's make May Native Plant Month—and take a meaningful step to protect our natural heritage and grow a greener future.

We urge a favorable report on SB229 to make every May Native Plant Month in Maryland, joining 44 states and D.C. that have issued proclamations, eleven of which have codified this initiative into law.

Sincerely,

The undersigned individuals support Native Plant Month SB229/HB217:

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Cinda Hughes	Baltimore City	2 Hamlet Hill Rd., Baltimore MD. 21210
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Susan Payne	Baltimore City	312 Broadmoor Road, Baltimore, MD 21212
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Anne Perry	Baltimore City	107 Cross Keys Rd., Baltimore, MD, 21210
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Manzar Rassouli-Taylor	Baltimore City	Baltimore, MD 21218
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Devin Colbert	Baltimore City	1837 Bolton St Baltimore, MD 21217

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Hamah Pizriot	Baltimore City	4418 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21210
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Jessica Xander	Baltimore City	5305 Hamlet Ave. Baltimore, MD 21214
Natalie Scheeler	Baltimore City	3424 Odonnell street baltimore MD 21224
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Laura Wiesler	Baltimore County	419 Georgia Ct. Towson, MD 21204
Laurel Peltier	Baltimore County	909 Rolandvue Road, Towson, MD 21204
Rene Bookoff	Baltimore County	Phoenix, MD 21131
Shannon Davis	Baltimore County	1202 Dublin Court Lutherville, MD 21093
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Alicia Eakle	Baltimore County	1452 Kent Road Essex MD 21221
Allison Williams	Baltimore County	1309 Aintree Road, Towson md 21286
Amanda Harner	Baltimore County	21057
Amanda Wray	Baltimore County	8308 Thornton Road, Towson, MD 21204
Amy Sinnott	Baltimore County	21228
Andi Curran	Baltimore County	608 Meadowridge Rd. Baltimore, MD 21204
Angelina Chilcoat	Baltimore County	21228
Ann Bruner	Baltimore County	902 Fallscroft Way, Lutherville, MD 21083
Barbara Newton	Baltimore County	2920 Northwind Rd. Baltimore, MD 21234
Ben Palmer	Baltimore County	606 Overbrook Road 21212

Beth Gregory	Baltimore County	1856 Circle Road Baltimore, MD 21204
Beth Schenck	Baltimore County	1504 Providence Road, Towson, MD 21286
Beth Winter	Baltimore County	10934 Mays Chapel Rd, Lutherville 21093
Brooks Morales	Baltimore County	6628 Walnutwood Circle 21212
Carlton Sexton	Baltimore County	600 Chestnut Ave Towson MD 21204
Carol Garinther	Baltimore County	2007 Greenspring Valley Road 21153
Carolyn Magee	Baltimore County	17525 Grace Road, Hampstead, MD 21024
Catherine Dreese	Baltimore County	6516 Darnall Road Towson MD 21204
Charles Scheeler	Baltimore County	704 Stone Barn Court 21286
Cheryl Oed	Baltimore County	1821 Forrest Rd Parkville, MD 21234
Chris Needham	Baltimore County	23 Pelczar Ave Essex MD 21221
Deborah Koski	Baltimore County	8 Hunters Court Lutherville, MD 21093
Denise Lavery	Baltimore County	704 Hampton Lane, Towson, MD 21286
Dolores Ciufu	Baltimore County	802 Elderbank Ct . Baltimore, MD 21286
Don Blum	Baltimore County	21286
Donna Bisbikis- Spencer	Baltimore County	702 Scarlett Dr Towson Md 21286
Dorothy Stoltz	Baltimore County	1207 Overbrook Road, Idlewylde, MD 21239
Eduardo Gonzalez	Baltimore County	808 Seaward Rd Baltimore MD 21286
Edward Webster	Baltimore County	7937 St Clair Lane, Baltimore MD 21222
Elisabeth Richard	Baltimore County	13509 Summer Hill Dr. Phoenix, MD 21131
Elizabeth Hansen	Baltimore County	702 Chumleigh Road Baltimore, MD 21212
Elizabeth-Paris Russell-Ward	Baltimore County	21117
Ellen Beckstrom	Baltimore County	1600 Mt. Carmel Rd. Parkton MD 21120
Emily Keever	Baltimore County	4 Teresa Marie CT Manchester MD 21102
Erich Spencer	Baltimore County	702 Scarlett Dr, Towson MD 21286
Eva lopez	Baltimore County	21212
Fay Citerone	Baltimore County	Towson Maryland

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Grace Hulse	Baltimore County	21057
Gretchen Sarkin	Baltimore County	3 Southerly Court, #3, Towson, MD 21286
Harrison Mont	Baltimore County	12016 Ridge Valley Drive Owings Mills MD 21117
Hayley Streeter	Baltimore County	10506 Old Court Rd Woodstock Md 21163
Heather Loyd	Baltimore County	21111
Heather Riordan	Baltimore County	21111
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Inna Alesina	Baltimore County	12140 Velvet Hill Dr. Owings Mills
Jan Rubenstein	Baltimore County	3515 Mail Rd Westminster, MD 21157
Jane Crawford	Baltimore County	37 Farnham Way, Timonium, MD 21093
Jane Wolfson	Baltimore County	3310 Richfield Lane Phoenix, MD 21131
Jeanne Ball	Baltimore County	13402A Manor Road Baldwin, MD 21013
Jessica Jones	Baltimore County	1714 Glen Keith Blvd Apt. D Towson MD 21286
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Jim Ball	Baltimore County	13402A Manor Road Baldwin, MD 21013
Jin Nothmann	Baltimore County	9041 Meadow Heights Rd. Randallstown, MD 21133
Joe Corcoran	Baltimore County	113 Starhill Lane Baltimore, MD 21228
John Galbreath	Baltimore County	2516 Chestnut Woods Ct. Reisterstown, MD 21136
Julia Blum	Baltimore County	21286
Julia Katschinski	Baltimore County	36 English Run Turn Sparks Glencoe 21152
Julie Minch	Baltimore County	8415 Bellona Lane, Towson, MD 21204
Juliet Okojie	Baltimore County	21117
Karen Shavin	Baltimore County	404 Dunkirk Road, Baltimore, MD 21212
Kassandra Wilcke	Baltimore County	22 Manor Ave. Baltimore, MD 21206
Katherine J Martin	Baltimore County	9127 Cowenton Avenue Perry Hall, MD 21128

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Kathleen Rescigno	Baltimore County	6 Helm Court, Towson, MD 21286
Kathy Wilder	Baltimore County	6608 Weymouth Court 21212
Katie Swearngen	Baltimore County	2318 Falls Gable Lane Apt K, 21209
Keira Saunders	Baltimore County	21206
Ken Swearngen	Baltimore County	2318 Falls Gable Lane Apt K, 21209
Kevin McDonagh	Baltimore County	710 Hampton Lane Baltimore, MD 21286
Kim Nacrelli	Baltimore County	6507 Sherwood Road, Baltimore, MD 21239
Kim Nelson	Baltimore County	1920 White Hall Rd. White Hall, MD 21161
Kimberly Hughes	Baltimore County	336 Stonewall Road, Catonsville, MD 21228
Kirsten Hoffman	Baltimore County	701 W Joppa Rd. Towson, MD 21204
Lamont	Baltimore County	27 Silverton Ct. Cockeysville, MD 21030
Laura Cook	Baltimore County	626 Norhurst Way, Catonsville MD 21228
Laura Scheeler	Baltimore County	1405 Gateshead Rd, Towson 21286
Laura wellmann	Baltimore County	21234
Lauren Matthews	Baltimore County	14417 Maple Ridge Ct, Baldwin, MD 21013
Laurie Taylor-Mitchell	Baltimore County	1106 Chatterleigh Circle, Towson, MD, 21286
Leigh Peck	Baltimore County	11502 St. David's Lane Lutherville MD 21073
Leslie Oed	Baltimore County	21234
Leslie Rodgers	Baltimore County	602 Meadowridge Rd, Towson MD 21204
Leslie schulman	Baltimore County	1213 Broadway Rd. Lutherville 21093
Leslie Speer	Baltimore County	21152
Liam McCahill	Baltimore County	10 Ranger Ct, Parkville, MD 21234
Linda Corcoran	Baltimore County	113 Starhill Ln Catonsville MD 21228
Lister Bradley	Baltimore County	108 Galewood Road, Timonium, MD 21093
Lucy Haus	Baltimore County	8405 Saunders Rd. Lutherville MD 21093
Lynn Spates	Baltimore County	3712 Buckeystown Pike Buckeystown MD 21717

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Martha Gardner	Baltimore County	2 Spring Green Lane, Hunt Valley, MD 21030
Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler **	Baltimore County	704 Stone Barn Court 21286
Mary McWilliams	Baltimore County	904 Oak Hill Rd. Baltimore, MD 21239
Mary T Catanzariti	Baltimore County	222 Beech View Ct. Towson MD 21286
Melissa Goldman	Baltimore County	10832 Sandringham Rd Cockeysville MD 21030
Melissa Thompson	Baltimore County	21221
Meredith McDonagh	Baltimore County	710 Hampton Lane, Towson, MD 21286
Michael Pearl	Baltimore County	21117
Molly McElwee	Baltimore County	114 Wyndcrest Ave Baltimore, MD 21228
Monica R Tucker	Baltimore County	530 Greenwood Rd Ruxton MD 21204
Monique Stins	Baltimore County	503 Overbrook Rd Baltimore MD 21212
Moriah Ray	Baltimore County	21013
Muhammad Haskett	Baltimore County	21117
Nancy Berger	Baltimore County	2 Stone Row Ct. Hunt Valley MD 21030
Nancy Fishel	Baltimore County	15 Shaded Glen Court Owings Mills MD 21117
Nancy Funk	Baltimore County	13801 York Rd., F-8
Nancy Wakefield	Baltimore County	11950 Park Heights Ave.,Owings Mills, MD 21117
Nichola Ferguson	Baltimore County	21133
Nick May	Baltimore County	104 Martingale Road Lutherville, MD 21093
Nicoleta Covington	Baltimore County	21212
Olivia Nickens	Baltimore County	17 Fuller Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21206
Paula Pearl	Baltimore County	12137 Velvet Hill Drive Owings Mills, MD 21117
Rachel Holaday	Baltimore County	2354 Sweet Meadow Rd, Baltimore, MD 21209
Ralph Bohlin	Baltimore County	3900 Sweet Air Rd. Phoenix, MD 21131

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Rebecca Schacht	Baltimore County	Waveland Rd, Catonsville MD 21228
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Richard Barton	Baltimore County	7003 Copeleigh Road, Baltimore, MD 21212
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Ruth Ann McCahill	Baltimore County	10 Ranger Ct, Parkville, MD 21234
Sally Callihan	Baltimore County	10628 Partridge Lane Cockeysville, MD 21030
Samuel Meehan	Baltimore County	10 Woodstream CT Apt 12 Garrison, MD 21117
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Sara Cooke	Baltimore County	616 Hatherleigh Rd Baltimore, MD 21212
Sara Robinson	Baltimore County	1002 Brooklandwood Rd Lutherville 21093
Sara Yosua	Baltimore County	1003 Hillside View Rd, Parkton, MD 21120
Sarah Brown	Baltimore County	400 Rockfleet Rd, #102 Timonium 21093
Sarah Miller	Baltimore County	21221
Sasha Galbreath	Baltimore County	2516 Chestnut Woods Court, Reisterstown, MD 21136
Scott Cooper	Baltimore County	10832 Sandringham Rd, Cockeysville, MD 21030
Shelby Kaminsky	Baltimore County	13521 Devonfield Dr., Baldwin MD 21013
Skip Falatko	Baltimore County	138 Hopkins Road Baltimore MD 21212
Stefan Dehaseth	Baltimore County	21212
Stephen Holt	Baltimore County	2118 Forest Ridge Rd. Lutherville, MD 21093
Sue Grady	Baltimore County	2 Oakhampton Drive, Lutherville, MD 21093
Sue Thompson	Baltimore County	7032 Greenbank Rd. Middle River, Md 21220
Susan Pennington	Baltimore County	320 Alabama Rd Towson, MD 21204
Susan Wierman	Baltimore County	607 Wilton Rd Towson Md 21286
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Virtue Oluyinka	Baltimore County	21162
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Winnie Davis	Baltimore County	251 Pittston Circle, Owings Mills. Md. 21117
Yana Karp	Baltimore County	36 English Run Turn Sparks Glencoe 21152
Haynes	Baltimore County	4552 Vermeer Ct .Owings Mills, MD 21117
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Suzanne Chapelle	Baltimore County	6021 Lakeview Road, Baltimore 21210
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Kathleen Truelove	Baltimore County	13801 York Road Cockeysville MD 21030
Susan Cashman	Baltimore County	21204
Elizabeth M Miller	Baltimore County	523 Murdock Rd. Baltimore, MD 21212
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Nettie Washburn	Baltimore County	21204
Arthur Hildreth	Baltimore County	45 Battersea Bridge Ct. Lutherville-Timonium 21093
Juliette Washburn	Baltimore County	21093
Anne Wetzler	Baltimore County	21030
Madison Elliott	Baltimore County	332 Overbrook Road Baltimore Md 21212
Beth Purvis	Baltimore County	919 Army Rd. Towson, MD 21204
Zinna Moore	Baltimore County	6609 Bonnie Ridge Dr. Unit 102 Baltimore MD 21209
Hugh Calkins	Baltimore County	1856 Circle Road, Towson MD 21204
Marina Gavilow	Baltimore County	21117
Kathleen Gibison	Baltimore County	21093
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Casey Callanan	Baltimore County	21212
Huff Millard	Baltimore County	2 Lindsay Lane Baltimore 21212
Isabel Harvey	Baltimore County	21212
Madeline Richard	Baltimore County	13509 Summer Hill Dr, Phoenix MD 21131
Glenn Richard	Baltimore County	13509 Summer Hill Dr, Phoenix MD 21131
Bernard Richard	Baltimore County	400 Symphony Circle Hunt Valley MD 21031
Jean Richard	Baltimore County	400 Symphony Cir. Hunt Valley MD 21030
Amy Hart	Baltimore County	21155
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Jennifer Rauhofer	Baltimore County	1234 Sparks Rd., Sparks, MD 21152
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Susan Millard	Baltimore County	116 Glen Argyle Road, Baltimore, MD 21212
Mary Lord	Baltimore County	8114 Halton Road Towson MD 21204
Heather Franklin	Baltimore County	21212
Cindy Knipp	Baltimore County	1209 Lake Falls Road, Baltimore, MD 21210
Dene Hogge	Baltimore County	1704 Ruxton Rd. Towson, MD 21204
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Kathryn Yarkony	Baltimore County	7110 Oxford Rd Baltimore MD 21212
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Nancy Mears	Baltimore County	13723 Manda Mill Lane, Phoenix Ms 21131
Wendy Albert	Baltimore County	1720 Circle Road, Towson, MD 21204
Sandra Leichtman	Baltimore County	1609 Ruxton Rd., Towson MD 21204
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Gay Legg	Baltimore County	1711 Circle Road, Ruxton, MD 21204
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Elizabeth Miller	Baltimore County	523 Murdock Road Baltimore MD 21212
Eloise Brown	Baltimore County	2525 Pot Spring Rd, I 506 Timonium, MD 21093
Kathleen Hake	Baltimore County	703 Milldam Rd. Towson MD 21286
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Kristin Ferris	Baltimore County	1801 Woodside Ave, Halethorpe, MD 21227
Jessica	Baltimore County	2114 Fernglen Way, Catonsville, MD 21228
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Carolyn Christy	Baltimore County	8341 Carrbridge Circle, Towson,MD, 21204
Nancy Denenbaum	Baltimore County	8413 Saunders Road, Timonium, MD, 21093
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Cynthia Cahn	Baltimore County	1819 Thornton Ridge Rd., Baltimore, 21204
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Linda Barone	Baltimore County	303 Gateswood Road Timonium MD 21093
Mary Marshburn	Baltimore County	21093
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Monica Tucker	Baltimore County	530 Greenwood Road Ruxton, MD 21204
Susan Black	Baltimore County	1302 Carrollton ave. 21204
Carol Palanker	Baltimore County	2900 Paper Mill Rd Phoenix, MD 21131
Rob Satriano	Baltimore County	1924 wilson point rd. Middle river, MD 21220
alex dull	Baltimore County	1924 wilson point rd middle river 21220
Elaine Born	Baltimore County	1212 Scotts Knoll Court. 21093
Christina Drews	Baltimore County	21 Wyndcrest Ave, Catonsville MD 21228
Miriam Winder Kelly	Baltimore County	11306 Woodland Drive, Lutherville, MD 21093
Kathy Catzen	Baltimore County	1 Haddon Court, Baltimore, MD 21212
Virginia Graham	Baltimore County	14028 Blenheim rd N Phoenix Md 21131
Donald Scheeler	Baltimore County	1405 Gateshead Rd., Towson, MD 21286
Dena Crosson	Baltimore County	20737
Martha McCauley	Baltimore County	10412 Greentop Road, Cockeysville, MD, 21030
Angie Bosak	Calvert	20639
Mary Bonney	Calvert	2215 Adelina Road Prince Frederick, MD 20678
Jo Longhill	Calvert	2428 Azalea Road Port Republic, MD. 20676
Kathleen Daniel	Calvert	2417 Acacia Rd., Port Republic, MD 20676
Karen Anderson	Calvert	5130 Nanticoke Way, Huntingtown MD 20639
Michele Hawley	Calvert	675 Wilson Rd. Huntingtown, MD 20639
Karyn Molines	Calvert	7906 Delores Court, Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732
Susan Hammond	Calvert	
David Braun	Calvert	2417 Acacia Road, Port Republic, MD 20676
Mike Fechtmann	Calvert	11845 Blue Point Court, Lusby, MD, 20657
Susan Farnsworth	Calvert	2424 Arrowhead Rd Port Republic MD 20676

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Samantha Williams	Calvert	12850 Rio Grande Trail Lusby MD 20657
Alexandra Smith	Calvert	11555 Bowie CT lusby MD 20657
Andy Rogers	Calvert	11477 Laguna Court, Lusby, MD 20657
Alex Marks	Carroll	7068 Melstone Valley Way, Marriottsville, MD 21104
Joan Bielefeld	Carroll	16908 Hereford Rd. Monkton MD 21111
Nichole Persing	Carroll	2651 Old Taneytown Rd, Westminster, MD 21158
Rachael Beck	Carroll	614 Klees Mill Road Westminster, MD 21157
Vicky Stata	Carroll	1609 Exeter Rd. Westminster MD 21157
Anna Poladian-Prior	Carroll	5829 Westchester Hills Ct, Eldersburg, MD 21784
Leslie Netherton	Carroll	611 Calliope Way Mt. Airy, Md 21771
Cecelia Rongione	Carroll	1614 Auburn Ct, Westminster, MD. 21157
Rosemary Rest	Carroll	4116 Geeting Rd Westminster MD 21158
Marcina Garner	Carroll	21157
Sarah Fisher	Carroll	3605 Sykesville RD Westminster MD 21157
Don Wehry	Cecil	21911
Corrine Welsh	Charles	8600 Plenty Highlands Place Port Tobacco, MD 20677
Erica Rizor	Charles	La Plata, MD 20646
Esther Bonney	Charles	7454 Woodhaven Drive La Plata, MD 20646
Georgia Bonney	Charles	7454 Woodhaven Drive, La Plata, MD 20646
Janet McGrane	Charles	15275 Hatton Landing Dr. Newburg MD 20664
Joseph Bonney	Charles	7454 Woodhaven Dr, La Plata, MD 20646
Lynne Wheeler	Charles	6690 Chicamuxen Rd, Indian Head, MD 20640
Madeline Kaba	Charles	Waldorf 20601
Marlene Smith	Charles	15321 Colony Place, Waldorf, Md 20601
Miriam Joy Bonney	Charles	7454 Woodhaven Drive, La Plata, MD 20646
Paris Tse	Charles	Waldorf, MD 20602
Peter	Charles	7454 Woodhaven Dr LaPlata MD 20646
Philip Bonney	Charles	7454 Woodhaven Dr, La Plata, MD 20646
Rebekah Bonney	Charles	Woodhaven Dr. La Plata MD 20646
Skylan Brassell	Charles	4817 Elmley Place, Apt. 218 Waldorf MD 20602
Susan Knower	Charles	4792 Piney Church Rd. Waldorf MD 20602
Terry Thir	Charles	20695
Linda Ivko	Charles	3126 Floating Leaf Ln. Waldorf MD 20603
Kathryn Southard	Charles	6995 Port Tobacco Road, Welcome, Maryland 20693
Jeanne Exum	Charles	10930 Madison Pl., Waldorf, MD
Molly Pinkas	Charles	129 Tall Grass Ln, La Plata, MD 20646
Jennifer Decker	Charles	6080 Biggs Farm Pl, La Plata, MD 20646

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Judith Slaughter	Dorchester	2802 Persimmon Place, Cambridge MD 21613
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Cheryl Nehls	Frederick	329 E 3rd Street, Frederick, MD 21701
Judy Kelley	Frederick	10622 Powell Road, Thurmont, MD 21788
Kathy Woodall	Frederick	316 Broadway Frederick, MD 21701
Lisa Kuder	Frederick	6708 W Lakeridge Rd, New Market MD 21774
Lyn Witt	Frederick	276 Dill Ave. Frederick, MD 21701
Mary Reis	Frederick	336 E 3rd Street. Frederick Md 21701
Norman Endlich	Frederick	9068 Harris Place, Frederick, MD 21704
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Rita Potter	Frederick	6861 Snowberry Ct., Frederick, MD 21703
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Wanda Ford	Frederick	319 E 3rd St, Frederick MD 21701
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Joan Hart	Frederick	21710
Laurel Carroll	Frederick	2738 Flintridge Dr, Myersville MD 21773
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Jane Choi-Doan	Frederick	5325 Wye Creek Dr. Frederick, MD 21703
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Susan Giacinto	Frederick	406 Lee Pike Frederick, MD 21702
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Deborah Portney	Frederick	822 Mews Lane Frederick, MD 21701
Julie Heatherly	Frederick	3200 Cedar Grove Mews, Frederick, MD
Stephanie Lamb	Frederick	4746 black eyed susan mews
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Charmaine Campbell	Frederick	3571 Tabard Lane, Frederick MD 21704
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Jamie Shopland	Frederick	3915 Braveheart Circle, Frederick MD 21704
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Steven Small	Frederick	922 Shawnee Dr. Frederick, MD 21701
Rachel Mellinger	Frederick	5874 Union Ridge Drive, Adamstown, MD 21710
Aj Burnell	Frederick	205 w b st Brunswick MD 21716
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Jess Schaefer	Frederick	1766 Springfield Ln, Frederick MD 21702
Nora Wade	Frederick	903 Shawnee Dr, Frederick MD 21701
Lina Ferguson	Frederick	21704
Barb Davis	Garrett	21550
Christine Campe-Price	Garrett	21536
Daniel Portwood	Garrett	603 East Alder Street, Oakland, MD 21550
Deborah Hutton	Garrett	21550
Katharine Law	Garrett	2360 Lake Shore Drive Oakland, MD 21550
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Liz McDowell	Garrett	Moonridge Lane, Grantsville, MD 21536
Nicole Zinn	Garrett	85 Highland Ave, Accident MD 21520
Ron Boyer	Garrett	Moonridge Lane, Grantsville, MD 21536

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Bernard Norton Jr	Harford	1940 Glenroths Drive Abingdon, MD 21009
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Martha Banghart	Harford	2648 Jolly Acres Rd. White Hall, MD 21161
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Diana Deems	Harford	543 Callander Way, Abingndon, MD 21009
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Wayne Straight	Harford	4304 Federal Hill Rd., Street, MD 21154
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Cara Roberts	Howard	13430 Chris Mar Ct. Highland, MD
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Cecilia Tomori	Howard	3450 Harrington Drive, Ellicott City MD 21042

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Lora Wilder	Howard	9521 Sweet Grass Ridge, Columbia, MD 21046
Richard Diener	Howard	21043
Kate Reilly	Howard	21046
Allyson Rogan	Howard	9103 Brunners Run Ct, Columbia, MD 21045
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Teresa Weathington	Howard	9407 Clocktower Lane, Columbia MD 21046
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Jill Fonda Allen	Montgomery	20833
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Julie Hughes	Montgomery	421 Ethan Allen Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912
Kate Clarke	Montgomery	20895
Kathryn Menasco-Smith	Montgomery	4327 Valley Stream Avenue, Burtonsville, MD 20866
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Meg Spearman	Montgomery	2715 Elnora St Silver Spring MD 20902
Meredith Eriksen	Montgomery	3507 Perry Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895
Michelle Kalas	Montgomery	20902
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Monica Dayhoff	Montgomery	10110 Portland Place Silver Spring MD 20901
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Neelam Giri	Montgomery	11408 Rokeby Avenue, Garrett Park, MD 20896
Nicholas	Montgomery	20852
Penina Handelsman	Montgomery	5103 Bradley Blvd Chevy Chase MD 20815
Sara Drury	Montgomery	4225 Colchester Dr. Kensington, MD
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Sarah Stocks Gallis	Montgomery	12912 Evanston St, Rockville, MD 20853
Shana Marshall	Montgomery	2614 Harris Ave Silver Spring MD 20902
Stephanie Adams	Montgomery	6307 Marjory Lane Bethesda, MD 20817
Susan Gander	Montgomery	20895
Tanvi Nagpal	Montgomery	Wapakoneta Road Bethesda, MD 20816
Vicki Stearn	Montgomery	20814
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Meghan Ellis	Montgomery	4516 Clearbrook Lane, Kensington, MD 20895
Cynthia Eisele	Montgomery	4204 Glenrose Street, Kensington, MD 20895
Alexandra Heslop Shockey	Montgomery	10708 Alloway Dr., Potomac, MD 20854
Clare Piercy	Montgomery	5004 Newport Avenue Bethesda MD 20816
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Lisa Frulla	Montgomery	5309 Portsmouth Road Bethesda MD 20816
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Deborah Goldberg	Montgomery	122 Fleetwood Ter., Silver Spring, MD. 20910
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Ari Casalini	Prince George's	5724 39th Avenue Hayystville MD 20781
Emilia Ross	Prince George's	7402 Dickinson Ave, College Park MD, 20740

Jimmy Rogers	Prince George's	20707
Maya Hill	Prince George's	15100 Casimir Road, Brandywine MD 20613
Snezana Haymes	Prince George's	3309 Castleleigh Rd. Beltsville MD 20706
Jan Goldstein	Prince George's	1520 Laurel Drive, Accokeek MD 20607
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Donna Almquist	Prince George's	112 Hedgewood Drive 20770
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Craig Holberger	Queen Anne's	113 Woodmoor Rd, Stevensville, MD. 21666
Patricia Valdata	Somerset	Crisfield, MD 21817
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Amy Henderson	St. Mary's	41365 Knight Rd, Leonardtown 20650
Darcy White	St. Mary's	46745 Planters Ct, Lexington Park, MD, 20653
Delaney Snode	St. Mary's	45255 Clarks Mill Rd, Hollywood, MD 20636
Kevin Snode	St. Mary's	45255 Clarks Mill Rd., Hollywood, MD 20636
Laura Ross	St. Mary's	47232 Schwartzkopf Dr, Lexington Park, MD 20653
Leslie D Taylor	St. Mary's	21796 Rose Bank Road Leonardtown, MD 20650
Caroline King	St. Mary's	23561 Lilliflora Dr., California, MD 20619
Rick Malchow	St. Mary's	22303 Saint Clements Ave, Leonardtown, MD 20650
Carrie Krier	St. Mary's	22303 St. Clements Ave., Leonardtown, MD 20650
Stephanie Niemi	St. Mary's	25731 Vista Road, Hollywood, MD 20636
Rebecca Lira	St. Mary's	23140 Marshall Rd, Lexington Park, MD 20653
Georgette Gaskin	St. Mary's	21475 Tred Avon Ct 20653
Rebecca Wolf	St. Mary's	25731 Vista Road, Hollywood, MD 20636
Julie Hartshorn	St. Mary's	40529 Port Place, Leonardtown, MD 20650
Katherine Zacchetti	St. Mary's	21703 Meadow Way Leonardtown MD 20650
Patricia Armstrong	St. Mary's	41520 Singletree Drive Leonardtown MD 20650
Susan Polsky	St. Mary's	20201 Heron Ln, Lexington Park MD 20653
Jennifer Malig	St. Mary's	23318 Bushwood City Rd. Chaptico, MD 20621
Laura Lang	St. Mary's	23334 Esperanza Drive, Lexington Park MD 20653
Dawn Letts	St. Mary's	45441 Happyland Rd Valley Lee MD 20692
Theresa Rohaly	St. Mary's	45899 Kristi Lynn Ct, Lexington Park MD 20653
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Jeannie Hucko	St. Mary's	26460 Peninsular Dr Hollywood MD 20636
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Maribeth Lane	Talbot	115 S. Harrison Street, Easton MD 21601
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Martha Horner	Talbot	7098 Edmond Ave, Easton, MD 21601
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Kate Cox	Talbot	4763 Sailors Retreat Rd, Oxford, MD 21654
Dana Vlk	Talbot	26242 Heronwood Road Easton, Md 21601
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Ianna Little	Washington	21783
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Calissa Rodriguez	Washington	Hagerstown MD 21740
Brittney Pheobus	Washington	24855 Raven Rock Road sabillasville MD 21780
Matthew Dinn	Washington	911 Marshall St Hagerstown md 21740
Guinevere Cockey	Wicomico	4731 Tyaskin Rd. Tyaskin, MD 21865
Marian Kelley	Wicomico	36071 Poplar Neck Rd. Willards, MD
Judy Little	Wicomico	2445 Quarter Landing Lane
Jenny Tusing	Wicomico	608 Grason Lane, Fruitland, MD 21826
Tim Tusing	Wicomico	608 Grason Lane, Fruitland, MD 21826
Jacky Grindrod	Worcester	PO. Box 826, Berlin MD 21811
Richard Davey	Worcester	21863
Terry	Worcester	204 W Market St. Snow Hill, MD 21863
Gabby Ross	Worcester	10174 Rabbit Ridge Rd. Bishopville MD 21813
Ann Hurleypalmer		

Debbie Gousha	
Gabriel Yulfo-Soto	
Sally Merz	

**SB229\_WildOnesGreaterFrederick\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carey Murphy

Position: FAV



**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Testimony On: SB 229 – General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month**

**Organization: Wild Ones Greater Frederick Maryland**

**Submitting: Carey Murphy**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: March 12, 2026**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 229 – General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month. We strongly urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on SB 229.

The Wild Ones Greater Frederick Maryland chapter is one of 99 chapters across the country with a mission to educate and advocate for native plants. Our chapter was established in 2024 to fill a void in central Maryland. Despite the benefits of native plants—pollinator support, flood control, air and water purification, etc.—there are too few of them in Frederick County.

In order to increase native plants in our community and raise awareness of their essential services, our non-profit at no cost organizes plant swaps, offers native plant garden tours, participates in community science, and partners with native plant nurseries and landscape architects. At a recent school visit where we demonstrated how to grow native plants from seed, students were unfamiliar with native plants and their significance to ecosystems and our own health.

In our fast growing county, nature needs nurture. The permanent designation of “May as Native Plant Month” will afford us additional opportunities to effectively collaborate with businesses, schools, and neighbors to plan programming, provide outreach, practice conservation, and share native plants at the height of the spring planting season.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on SB 229.

Sincerely,

*Carey Murphy*

CAREY MURPHY

Vice-President, Wild Ones Greater Frederick Maryland

Cc: Jan Knox, President

**SB0229\_IzeINativePlants\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Claudio Vazquez

Position: FAV



**SB0229: General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month**

**Hearing date: 3/12/26**

**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment (EEE)**

**Position: FAV**

Dear Committee Members:

As owners of Izel Native Plants, a horticultural business based in the Mid-Atlantic region, we are in favor of SB0229 permanently designating May as Maryland Native Plant Month. Our business partners with regional nursery growers of native plants, making their inventory available to consumers via mail order. A native plant month and the attention it brings to native plants in Maryland would be of considerable value to our business.

We've seen interest in regionally adapted, native plants increase dramatically since our founding in 2014. However, there's still a large gap between what native-plant advocates know and the public knows. Adding native plants to urban and suburban landscapes provides important ecological services: managing stormwater, decreasing erosion, building soil health and productivity, supporting local food webs and beneficial insects, and creating beautiful, vibrant communities. That message is important, and having a designated month to focus education and marketing efforts is efficient and cost-effective for businesses like ours.

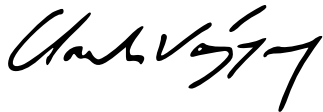
The spring shipping season represents a significant portion of our annual revenue, and having consistent messaging and awareness during that timeframe is synergistic. It benefits us and our partner-growers, like Delmarva Native Plants in Dorchester County. Consumers are eager to plant during this time, and we can coordinate activities and invest in annual, ongoing efforts to educate and reach them. Having a permanent designation allows adequate lead time to plan and commit resources well before the busy spring season arrives.

Finally, the proposed bill will further the goals of the Maryland's Best Native Plant Program, which was developed to educate and encourage consumers to purchase Maryland native plants from authorized retailers. As a certified retailer in the Program, we appreciate the support and infrastructure it brings to businesses. Having May as Maryland Native Plant Month would optimize those resources around Maryland's native plant industry.

We appreciate your time and consideration of Maryland Native Plant Month.

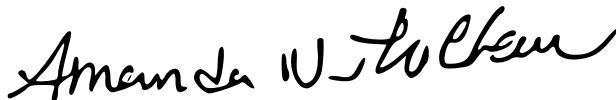
Sincerely,

Claudio Vazquez, co-owner, Izel Native Plants



Signed: March 10, 2026

Amanda McClean, co-owner, Izel Native Plants



Signed: March 10, 2026

# **SB229 FAV Native Plant Month.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dorothy Broadman

Position: FAV

**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,



Dorothy Broadman  
6620 Michaels Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20817

# **SB229 Collage.pdf**

Uploaded by: Esther Bonney

Position: FAV



# **SB229 Nurture Natives Letter of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Esther Bonney

Position: FAV



Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

On behalf of Nurture Natives, I am writing to express strong support for SB229, legislation that would permanently designate May as Maryland Native Plant Month.

Nurture Natives is a youth-led nonprofit dedicated to empowering young people through native biodiversity restoration and environmental education. Since our founding in 2022, we have educated more than 10,000 youth, planted 2.5 million native seeds, and distributed 70,000 seedlings across Maryland. Through this work, we have seen firsthand how native plants can reconnect communities with the landscapes around them while supporting critical ecological restoration.

Maryland is facing urgent environmental challenges. Pollinator populations are declining, waterways across the Chesapeake Bay watershed continue to struggle with pollution and stormwater runoff, and wildlife habitat is shrinking. Native plants are one of the most effective and accessible tools available to address these issues. Their deep root systems stabilize soil, filter pollutants before they reach waterways, and provide essential habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

Designating May as Maryland Native Plant Month would provide a consistent statewide opportunity to educate residents about the importance of native plants and encourage participation in habitat restoration. Importantly, this legislation comes at no cost to taxpayers while supporting Maryland's green economy. A permanent designation also gives nurseries, growers, landscapers, and educators the predictability they need to plan for the peak growing season and expand public engagement.

Young people across the state care deeply about the future of our landscapes and the Chesapeake Bay. At Nurture Natives, we often say that youth deserve a voice in the landscapes that shape us. Students across Maryland are already planting, restoring, and educating their communities about biodiversity. SB229 is an opportunity for the state to support and amplify that momentum.

For these reasons, Nurture Natives respectfully urges the committee to give SB229 a favorable report.

Sincerely,  
Esther Bonney  
Founder and Director  
Nurture Natives

**SB229 MDA LOS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Harrison Palmer

Position: FAV



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor

Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Kevin Atticks, Secretary

Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading  
Industry

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building

50 Harry S Truman Parkway

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

[mda.maryland.gov](http://mda.maryland.gov)

410.841.5885 Baltimore/Washington

410.841.5846 Fax

## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

Date: March 12th, 2026

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 229  
**BILL TITLE:** General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month  
**MDA POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) respectfully submits this letter in support of *Senate Bill 229 - General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month*. This legislation aligns with the Department's ongoing commitment to ecological stewardship and the economic vitality of Maryland's nursery and horticultural industries.

The MDA Native Plants Program has been at the forefront of promoting the use of indigenous species to bolster biodiversity and climate resilience across the state. Our program has worked diligently to bridge the gap between conservation goals and market availability. By providing technical assistance to nursery growers and implementing the "Maryland Native" plant labeling initiative, we have empowered consumers to make informed choices that support local ecosystems while driving demand for Maryland-grown products.

SB 229 further strengthens these efforts by expanding market access for specialized nursery producers through the prioritization of native species in public landscaping projects. By creating a stable and predictable demand within state and local jurisdictions, the legislation ensures that Maryland's greenhouse industry—a major contributor to our agricultural economy—remains a regional leader in this high-growth sector. This framework positions Maryland to capitalize on the economic potential of the green industry while simultaneously meeting our state's ambitious biodiversity and climate resilience goals.

The collaborative framework established by the MDA Native Plants Program demonstrates that environmental protection and economic development are not mutually exclusive. SB 229 codifies this success and provides the necessary statutory support to ensure that Maryland's native plant industry remains robust and competitive. For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Agriculture urges a favorable report on SB 229.

**Contact:** Harrison Palmer, Chief of Staff  
[harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov](mailto:harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov) | (410) 980-9887

# **Testimony for SB0229\_Green Towson Alliance.pdf**

Uploaded by: Hristina Schlaggar, PhD

Position: FAV

March 10, 2026

**SB0229 General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Hearing March 12, 2026**

**FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Committee,

The Green Towson Alliance strongly supports SB0229 establishing May as Maryland Native Plant Month. This designation will increase public knowledge and understanding of the ecological importance of native species. As awareness grows, residents are more likely to seek out and purchase native plants and to spend more on them than on non-native alternatives (1,2). This heightened demand helps activate and strengthen the local economic engine of native plant nurseries and related businesses across Maryland, creating both environmental and economic benefits for our communities.

Native plants are vital to ecosystem survival. Between 78–94% of flowering plants depend on pollinators for reproduction (3), and native plants provide the nectar and pollen that bees and butterflies need to survive (4). As native flora disappears, pollinators have declined dramatically; North American bumblebee populations have fallen by up to 96% (5), threatening both wild plants and agricultural crops.

Birds depend on native plants. 96% of terrestrial bird species feed insects to their young, and native trees such as oaks support hundreds of caterpillar species, while non-native trees support fewer than a dozen (6,7). Habitat loss has contributed to a 30% decline in North American bird populations since 1970, nearly 3 billion birds (8).

Native plants are crucial for soil, water, and climate health. Their deep roots stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and prevent sediment pollution in waterways (9,10), while non-native landscaping requires fertilizers and pesticides that contaminate groundwater (11,12). Native plants filter air pollutants and store carbon in extensive root systems (13), with native forests sequestering far more carbon below ground than non-native vegetation (14).

Protecting and restoring native plants is a matter of ecological survival. Continued reliance on non-native species threatens biodiversity, food security, and environmental stability. Establishing Maryland Native Plant Month will not only raise awareness and accelerate restoration of critical ecosystems, but will also stimulate demand for native plants, strengthening Maryland's nursery industry, supporting local growers and landscape professionals, and generating economic activity tied to conservation and restoration efforts across the state. **WE ASK FOR A FAVORABLE REPORT ON SB0229.**

Respectfully,

Hristina Schlaggar, PhD, for the Green Towson Alliance  
1101 Rolandvue Rd, Towson, Maryland 21204

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**SB229\_EEE\_Audubon\_NativePlants\_Fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FAV



**Maryland Office**  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21214

March 10, 2026

**To:** Chair Feldman, Vice-chair Kagan and members of the Maryland Senate Committee On Education, Energy and the Environment

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject:** Favorable Testimony for Maryland **Senate Bill 229 – Maryland Native Plant Month**

Audubon Mid-Atlantic and the undersigned Audubon Chapters located throughout Maryland support SB 229. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. The Independent Audubon chapters in Maryland listed below provide programming and education for countless Marylanders about the benefits of birds and bird habitat.

We enthusiastically support the establishment of Maryland Native Plant Month. Doing so through SB 229 will advance the protection of birds and our unique landscapes for future generations of Marylanders to benefit from. This bill is good for birds, for people, and for the dynamic ecosystems that make Maryland. It is also the logical next step after this legislature passed the Maryland Biodiversity and Agriculture Act to promote native plants two years ago. A Native Plant Month will open up new opportunities for civic engagement and community education throughout the state.

Science tells us birds are in decline due to habitat loss and climate change. 1/3 of eastern forest and grassland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. Ruby throated hummingbirds have fewer native plants to sustain themselves. Iconic birds such as – the Wood Thrush, American Kestrel, Brown Thrasher, Prairie Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark and Baltimore Oriole which are in decline across Maryland will benefit from this bill. SB 229 will slow and reverse this trend by drawing attention to and celebrating the benefits of native plants for Maryland’s birds and people through education and outreach about the importance of native plants to our landscapes.

SB 229 is not just for the birds. When native plants are a dominant factor in the landscape all wildlife benefits. Pollinators thrive, beneficial seeds are dispersed, pests are kept in check, and human communities benefit. Native forests, meadows and gardens support local economies throughout the state through ecosystem services, green job training, tourism, and associated industries. Promoting native plants in Maryland is also an investment in a future defined by climate change. We know that forests, grasslands, wetlands, coastal marshes, and gardens comprising native plants sequester carbon, slow flooding, filter water, and buffer vulnerable communities from increasing risks of climate change-related storm events and sea level rise.

The Science tells us:

- Invasive and exotic plant species provide minimal ecosystem services to birds and other wildlife
- Maryland's unique landscapes and birds are under threat from non-native plants
- Promoting native plants in Maryland's landscapes is a critical step to protecting our state's biodiversity, protecting bird habitat, and keeping Maryland resilient in the face of changing climate

SB 229 and a Native Plant Month will celebrate native plants, protect birds and bird habitat, create a more resilient environment, and support the local Maryland nursery economy. It will also continue to hold Maryland up as a leader in habitat conservation, ecosystem preservation, and the protection of birds now and into the future.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Audubon Mid-Atlantic, and:

Audubon Society of Central Maryland

Chesapeake Audubon Society

Prince George's Audubon Society

Southern Maryland Audubon Society

**SB229\_Vibrant Gardening LLC\_EEE\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jimmy Rogers

Position: FAV



# Vibrant Gardening

**Jimmy Rogers, PMP, CBLP**  
Owner, Vibrant Gardening LLC

303 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, MD 20707  
804-928-9916

nativegardenguy@gmail.com  
vibrantgardening.com

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Testimony on:** SB229 General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** March 12, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

As the owner of a native gardening business in Laurel, MD, I urge the committee to prioritize this bill to make May a “perennial” (excuse the pun) commemorative month celebrating native plants in Maryland. Our state is in the midst of a tidal wave of interest in native plants, gardening for wildlife, and residential ecology. However, there is a huge knowledge gap for most residents, both about which plants are native to Maryland and how best to use them in their gardens to support pollinators and other wildlife. Additionally, sourcing Maryland native plants that were grown in Maryland can be extremely difficult.

My business is Vibrant Gardening LLC, a native gardening consultancy and a [Maryland's Best Native Plants](#) Gold Tier Retailer. I am primarily interested in helping more people become native gardeners, so I provide education, design, sourcing, and installation support. The new Maryland Native Plants Program has just gotten off the ground and begun offering programming that has made my job immeasurably easier. I'd love to see a state-wide push every year to help our most novice gardeners, who are most often at the retail nurseries in May, be directed toward native plant products that can be grown in-state. I buy almost exclusively Maryland-grown plants for my customers and work closely with local growers. They need to know that their stocks will sell out this year in order to confidently scale next year.

Native plants and wildlife gardens provide residents with one of the few tangible, meaningful changes they can make to their properties to respond to climate change and species loss.

I urge the committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely,

**Jimmy Rogers, PMP, CBLP**  
Owner, Vibrant Gardening LLC



# Vibrant Gardening



**Gold Tier Retailer**

**MF\_SB 229\_Native Plant MonthF.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathy Kinsey

Position: FAV



**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Testimony On: SB 229 – General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month**

**Organization: Mobilize Frederick**

**Submitting: Kathy Kinsey**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: March 12, 2026**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 229 – General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month.

Mobilize Frederick, a nonprofit community advocacy organization formed to assist with implementation of innovative local solutions to address climate change, strongly urges the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on SB 229, which would permanently designate May as “Maryland Native Plant Month.”

Native plants are the foundation of our natural ecosystems and life-supporting processes. They promote public health, increase resilience to extreme weather, and contribute to the state’s agricultural and green economies. Native plants sequester carbon, provide food and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, absorb stormwater, improve soil health and air and water quality. In Frederick County’s recently released [Climate and Energy Action Plan](#), (CEAP), native plants and trees are prominently featured as the workhorses for nature-based solutions to our changing climate.

While CEAP envisions active collaboration with community members to achieve the Plan’s native landscaping and conservation goals, general public awareness of native plants and their benefits remains low. In Frederick County, native plantings are not common on public or private property, including our schools and libraries. Native plants are not widely available for sale and often difficult to procure.

At no cost to the State, this bill would raise awareness and encourage businesses, environmental groups, educators, and local governments to develop strategies to improve outreach and education, incorporate native plants into our landscapes, and support the nurseries and vendors that are needed to sustain the increasing demand for native plants.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on SB 229.

Sincerely,

KATHY KINSEY  
Chair, Government Affairs Committee

cc: Karen Cannon, Executive Director

**SB229\_BBC\_Lambrow\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathy Lambrow

Position: FAV

SB 229 – COMMEMORATIVE MONTH OF MAY – MARYLAND NATIVE PLANT MONTH –  
WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF THE BILL

To: Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (EEE)  
From: Kathy Lambrow, Baltimore Bird Club, Inc. (A chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society)

I write on behalf of the Baltimore Bird Club's Conservation Committee to voice our strong support for the passage of Senate Bill 229, which would designate May as Native Plant Month in Maryland. This proclamation is a timely, practical, and symbolic step that will advance biodiversity, ecological resilience, and public awareness across our state.

Native plants provide essential habitat and food resources for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Establishing a Native Plant Month will help promote restoration of local ecosystems, support declining pollinator populations, and strengthen natural defenses against pests and invasive species. In urban and suburban areas, native plantings can improve stormwater management, reduce maintenance costs, and enhance community green spaces.

Native plants are foundational to healthy bird populations. Many native insects that birds rely on for feeding nestlings are dependent on native trees and plants; without those plants, food webs collapse. Native shrubs, trees, and grasses offer appropriate shelter, nesting sites, and seasonal fruits and seeds that migratory and resident birds depend on throughout the year. Planting natives helps sustain insect abundance during breeding season, provides stopover resources for migrants, and supports species that are already stressed by habitat loss and climate change.

Beyond the ecological benefits, a formal Native Plant Month offers significant educational and economic opportunities. It would encourage schools, community groups, municipalities, and private landowners to organize planting events, workshops, and outreach that increase horticultural literacy and engage volunteers. Local nurseries and landscapers that specialize in native species would also benefit from increased public interest and demand.

Declaring May—when many native species emerge and bloom—aligns naturally with the planting season and maximizes public engagement. The designation is low-cost, non-regulatory, and broadly popular, yet capable of catalyzing meaningful action for conservation and climate resilience across Maryland.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Bird Club (a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.) urges you to support and advance SB 229. We appreciate your consideration and are available to provide additional information in support of the bill.

Sincerely,



Kathy Lambrow  
Chair, Conservation Committee



Cylburn Arboretum  
4915 Greenspring Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21209-4168  
410-733-5837

**SB0229\_Milligan\_EEE\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kevin McDonagh

Position: FAV

SB0229 “Maryland Native Plant Month Act”  
Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
March 12, 2026  
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I’m Alison Milligan and I ask you for a FAVORABLE vote for the “Maryland Native Plant Month Act.”

I am a USAF veteran and retired electrical engineer. For the last 13 years I have been working full-time as a volunteer Maryland Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Watershed Steward and Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP).

When I became a Master Gardener and Naturalist in 2013, I became aware of the importance of native plants to support wildlife (mostly birds) in my yard and community. As a Watershed Steward I learned the importance of native plants in preserving our natural resources, improving our air and water quality and providing habitat for many of the iconic animals of Maryland e.g. blue crab, rockfish, and Baltimore oriole. Over time I removed invasive and ornamental plants in my yard and transformed my property into a native landscape; immediately I started seeing more pollinators, including butterflies and birds raising their families in my yard. My neighbors noticed and started asking for help so they could do the same.

***For the past 12 years I have been offering my landscape design and native plant acquisition services to hundreds of Marylanders – for free*** (I drive a pickup truck and pull a trailer). In the first year of COVID, I acquired approximately 100,000 native plants for people unable to leave their homes but wanting to work in their yards to create healthy, safe environments, for themselves and the life around them. Science has found that nature is a natural healer – being in nature (or seeing it in your backyard or from your home office window) reduces stress and improves your overall well-being.

**I am writing to you today because I see firsthand the increasing demand for native plants. Personally, I cannot keep up with the requests for help.** Landscapers and the public’s knowledge of native plants is limited, which is a hurdle that will take time, but the availability of native plants makes this a more serious problem. If they’re not on nursery shelves with educational labels how can people learn about them and plant them in their yards? **Limited availability of native plants at nurseries means people submit to purchasing plants that are not benefiting our environment and in some cases are causing harm** (e.g. *Ligustrum* spp, *Mahonia bealei*, *Hedera helix*).

Many volunteers like me spend countless hours removing invasive plants in our parks and community areas only to see friends and neighbors purchasing the same plants at local nurseries. Very disheartening. Fortunately, many of these plants were recently added to the Maryland Prohibited Invasive Plant List – we are slowly making progress. But we need to do more. I believe awareness is the key.

In 2011 Maryland became the first state to require Environmental Literacy – something we should take pride in. Our children are becoming more environmentally aware and learning about the need for native plants to support biodiversity and preserve natural resources. **They're going home and requesting parents to plant native plants only to learn that mom and dad can't find them. How can that be?**

If Maryland had a permanent Native Plant month it would raise awareness and be a boon for business. Making native plants readily available to citizens would be good for the health of our watershed and our economy.

One of the most memorable experiences sharing my yard with a neighbor was when she came for an iced tea on a hot July day about 7 years ago. My pollinator garden was flush with blooming plants and countless butterflies. Bluebirds, Carolina wren and Northern Cardinals had raised families that spring and their songs filled the air. Her comment to me? **"I want what you have."** **If people saw what they could have, they would want it. Every yard matters, every resident matters and it doesn't take a lot of time to see the impact.**

I hope I put a smile on your face, but what I really want is for you to put a smile on mine and many others. You can do this by voting FAVORABLY for the Maryland Native Plant Month Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison Milligan  
[alison@lifewithnativeplants.org](mailto:alison@lifewithnativeplants.org)  
105 Round Bay Road  
Severna Park, MD 21146

PS Maryland's state flower, Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and state tree, the White Oak (*Quercus alba*) are both keystone native plants. Imagine the great advertising opportunity to promote these two plants that offer disproportionately large ecological benefits! For a 'little' state, we can have a 'big' impact!

**SB229\_Maryland Native Plant Society\_Hoffman\_FAV.pd**

Uploaded by: Kirsten Hoffman

Position: FAV



# Maryland Native Plant Society

APPRECIATION CONSERVATION EDUCATION

**Testimony:** SB229, General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month  
**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Hearing Date:** March 12, 2026  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Committee:

The Maryland Native Plant Society (MNPS) supports SB229, which requires the Governor to proclaim May as Maryland Native Plant Month each year. We urge the committee to provide a favorable report on the bill.

A commemorative month will continue the momentum of the new [Maryland Native Plants Program](#). One of the achievements of this program, thus far, is the [Maryland Native Plant Guide Piedmont Region](#), the first in a series of three books, which makes native plants far more accessible to Maryland gardeners.

Commemorating May as Maryland Native Plant Month will bring attention to native plants at precisely the time when most spring plants are purchased. A regular native plant month, in addition to the new [Maryland's Best Native Plants](#) certification and marketing program, will boost the state's still-developing native plant industry by helping new and existing native plant growers plan for and expand their operations. In addition, it will encourage retailers to stock more and buyers to purchase more native plants.

There are also large-scale economic reasons to support native plants via a commemorative month. Over half of the global economy is moderately to highly dependent on nature.<sup>1</sup> Yet our ecosystems are being rapidly depleted, with an average depletion in wildlife populations of 69% in the past 54 years.<sup>2</sup> A cocktail of stresses is causing this devastation: land use change, climate change, invasive species, pollution, and direct exploitation.<sup>3</sup> Protecting and promoting native plants is key to solving this crisis, as they have developed mutually beneficial relationships with other native creatures over millennia, making them more resilient to stress.

MNPS is a vibrant society of over 1400 members. Our membership supports this bill from a broad range of perspectives. We have landscapers and nursery owners who would benefit economically from being able to plan for a regular month celebrating native plants. Furthermore, much of our membership is fascinated by rare and endangered plants. Some of our members are generalists who enjoy all of nature, from plants to birds to fireflies to fungi. Many of us are native plant gardeners. Protecting and promoting our native plants would satisfy all these groups.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/02/an-ecosystems-economic-value-can-now-be-measured-heres-how/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://livingplanet.panda.org/en-US/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/five-drivers-nature-crisis>

Testimony: SB229  
Position: FAVORABLE  
Page 2

Creating a commemorative Maryland Native Plant Month will support Maryland businesses through an extremely low-cost measure, while doing the right thing for the future of humanity and wildlife.

Respectfully,

Kirsten Hoffman  
Treasurer, Maryland Native Plant Society  
hoffman01@yahoo.com

**SB0229\_DNR\_SUP\_EEE\_3-12-26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lydia McPherson

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

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March 12, 2026

BILL NUMBER: **SENATE BILL 229**

SHORT TITLE: **GENERAL PROVISIONS - COMMEMORATIVE MONTH - MARYLAND NATIVE PLANT MONTH**

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: **SUPPORT**

### EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

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The Department supports SB 229 to establish a Native Plant Month here in Maryland.

Native plants provide significant ecosystem benefits. They are essential for biodiversity, supporting native pollinators, insects, birds, and other wildlife by providing crucial food and habitat. Native plants also help maintain healthy watersheds by reducing stormwater runoff, controlling erosion, and filtering pollutants. Furthermore, they are well-adapted to local climate and soil conditions, often requiring less water, fertilizer, and pesticides than non-native species.

This legislation supports the Department's ongoing dedication to promote our state's native plants and having a commemorative month could be a useful tool for public outreach and communication materials.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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"Native plant" is a plant that occurs naturally in the State and surrounding region, ecosystem and habitat without direct or indirect human actions. This includes a plant that was present before colonial settlement or is listed as native to the State on the Maryland Plant Atlas website.

### BILL EXPLANATION

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This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim the month of May as Maryland Native Plant Month. This would recognize the benefits that native plants have on Maryland's natural environment.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
[lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov](mailto:lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov) ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)

**SB229\_MDSierraClub\_FAV\_EEE\_3.12.26.pdf**

Uploaded by: MARIE LAPORTE

Position: FAV

**Testimony on: SB229 General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month**

**Committee: Education, Energy and Environment**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: March 12, 2026**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB229, which seeks to permanently establish May as Maryland Native Plant Month to formalize the annual proclamations issued by the Governor since 2023. This recurring designation will increase public awareness of the essential role native plants play in supporting wildlife, sustaining Maryland's ecosystems and economy, and benefiting human communities. Importantly, SB229 will provide growers with the predictability and advance timing they need to grow the plants and presents a valuable promotional opportunity for Maryland's nursery industry—helping growers capture market share in an expanding plant category—while requiring no state funding or mandates.

Native plants form the backbone of Maryland's ecosystems and are the primary food source for much of our wildlife, including the state's native pollinators. **Maryland's \$3-billion agriculture industry relies heavily on pollination services—many of which are provided not by managed honeybees, but by native bee species which depend on native plants for habitat.** Many common crops grown in Maryland—such as squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, and blueberries—are pollinated most effectively by native bees, a fact that remains largely unknown to the public. Even crops that do not strictly require pollination, including cotton, soybeans, and peppers, show increased yields when visited by bees.<sup>1,2</sup>

The United States Geological Survey has found that native bees are the primary pollinators for most crops or play a critical role in supplementing the work of European honeybees. Yet despite their importance, once-abundant native pollinators are in steep decline. A large **North American study found that more than half of native bee species are in decline, and nearly one in four is now imperiled and at growing risk of extinction.**<sup>3</sup>

The drivers of these declines are complex, but habitat loss, including lack of native plants, consistently ranks among the most significant threats.<sup>4</sup> Between 20 and 45 percent of native bee species require specific native plants.<sup>5</sup> Another well-known pollinator example is the monarch butterfly, which cannot reproduce without milkweed. Monarch populations, once abundant, are now threatened with extinction. This pattern is repeated across countless species throughout our ecosystems, many of which are keystone species essential to maintaining healthy food webs.

<sup>1</sup> USGS, "What is the Role of Native Bees in the U.S.?", <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-role-native-bees-united-states>

<sup>2</sup> Hannah K. Levenson, et al., Evaluating the impact of increased pollinator habitat on bee visitation and yield metrics in soybean crops, *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment*, Volume 331, 2022, ISSN 0167-8809, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agee.2022.107901>.

<sup>3</sup> Pollinators in Peril, Center for Biological Diversity, February, 2017. [https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/native\\_pollinators/pdfs/Pollinators\\_in\\_Peril.pdf](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/native_pollinators/pdfs/Pollinators_in_Peril.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources, What's the Buzz: All About Pollinators <https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/habitat/wawhatsthebuzz.aspx#:~:text=Help%20Pollinators%20in%20Decline.resources%20for%20creating%20pollinator%20habitat:>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

Native pollinators are essential not only for food production but also for maintaining the broader food web that sustains Maryland's wildlife and, ultimately, human communities. Expanding the use of native plants is one of the most effective, accessible actions individuals, landowners, and local governments can take to support pollinator populations and strengthen ecological resilience.

Over centuries, native trees and plants have been removed from our landscapes and replaced with non-native—and sometimes invasive—species. While these plants may be visually appealing, they often provide little to no value for Maryland's wildlife, including our critical pollinators.

Beyond biodiversity benefits, native plants play a vital role in protecting Maryland's waterways. **Deep-rooted native vegetation filters pollutants, stabilizes soil, reduces nutrient runoff, improves stormwater management, and contributes to the health of the Chesapeake Bay.** Improved water quality supports bay grasses, fisheries, Maryland's \$600 million seafood industry, and our \$21 billion tourism industry.<sup>6</sup>

Public interest in native plants is growing, which presents an opportunity to address this ecological problem and boost our local nursery industry. In 2022, one in three American adults reported purchasing plants specifically to benefit wildlife, up from 26 percent in 2020.<sup>7</sup> Marylanders want to be part of the solution. Establishing a commemorative month to complement Maryland's Native Plant Program is an effective way to continue building public awareness through education and engagement and drive consumers to their local nurseries or to initiate projects with their landscape professional.

An annual, predictable commemorative month will give Maryland nurseries sufficient lead time to grow and promote native plants, encouraging voluntary participation by growers and retailers statewide. SB229 will help educate Marylanders while providing local businesses with a promotional opportunity to continue to grow consumer demand—one that aligns economic opportunity with environmental stewardship.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB229.

Marie LaPorte  
Biodiversity and Natural Places Chair  
marielaporte@verizon.net

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

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<sup>6</sup> Economic Impact of Tourism in Maryland, 2024, [TE Maryland EI 2024](#)

<sup>7</sup> Fallon, Caitlyn, "Consumer Gardening Report Finds One in Three People Turning to Native Plants, Gardening for Wildlife" *The National Wildlife Federation*, May 2, 2022

# **Testimony of Dr Mark Southerland for HB217 SB229 M**

Uploaded by: Mark Southerland

Position: FAV



## HB 217 and SB 229 Maryland Native Plant Month

### TESTIMONY of DR. MARK SOUTHERLAND for VERNAL POOL PARTNERS -- **Favorable**

I received a Ph.D. and Smithsonian Fellowship in freshwater ecology and have consulted for federal, state, and local agencies on water resource issues for 35 years. I am the founder of **Vernal Pool Partners** and have served with the Maryland Academy of Sciences' Science Council, Maryland Water Monitoring Council, Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board, Howard County Conservancy, Patapsco Heritage Greenway, and Safe Skies Maryland.

Native plants improve water quality and Bay health by absorbing stormwater runoff and filtering excess nutrients, pollution, and sediment.

Native plants supports our biodiversity by providing critical habitat and the primary food source for much of our wildlife, including the state's native pollinators.

Maryland's \$3-billion agriculture industry relies heavily on pollination services—many of which are provided not by managed honeybees, but by native bee species. Of the 100 crop species that supply 90% of the world's nutrition, more than 70 depend on bee pollination. Many common crops grown in Maryland—such as squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, and blueberries—are pollinated most effectively by native bees, a fact that remains largely unknown to the public. Even crops that do not strictly require pollination, including cotton, soybeans, and peppers, show increased yields when visited by bees. Yet despite their importance, once-abundant native pollinators are in steep decline. A large North American study found that more than half of native bee species are in decline, and nearly one in four is now imperiled and at growing risk of extinction. While the reasons for the decline in pollinators are complex, expanding the use of native plants is one of the most effective, accessible actions individuals, landowners, and local governments can take to support pollinator populations and strengthen ecological resilience.

The Time is Now. By designating Maryland Native Plant Month, the state will accelerate the protection and adoption of native landscaping needed to increase critical biodiversity, maintain local agriculture, and reduce pollution to our streams, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Southerland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping underline.

# **SB0229 FAV MES Maryland Native Plant Month Witness**

Uploaded by: Marlene Smith

Position: FAV

Marlene Smith  
15321 Colony Place | Waldorf, MD 20601  
240-416-7108 | nikhaven@comcast.net

## **SB 229, Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month**

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Hearing Date:** March 12, 2026

**Position:** FAVORABLE

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Committee,

As a constituent of District 27A residing in Waldorf, I am writing to formally introduce myself and to respectfully urge you to **pass SB 229, Maryland Native Plant Month**, during the 2026 legislative session. As a life-long resident of Charles County and someone deeply invested in the future of Maryland and its residents, I believe this legislation is critical for protecting our local ecosystems, including the native plants and creatures (biodiversity) that call Maryland home. We must take every step we can to save our treasured Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for your local constituents and future generations.

Having a designated Maryland Native Plant Month in May complements the Maryland Native Plants Program (MNPP) created in 2023. The MNPP is providing significant and irreplaceable support to the State's \$2 billion horticultural industry.

**High Impact, No Cost** - A formal Native Plant Month would boost local businesses—nurseries, landscapers, farmers—and empower education and outreach efforts statewide. Unlike one-time proclamations, legislation ensures lasting impact without spending public funds or adding mandates. By simply choosing to plant a native plant, nearly anyone can help our environment.

Maryland faces urgent environmental challenges: habitat loss, invasive species, polluted runoff, and climate change. Native plants are a simple, sustainable solution:

- **Protect Waterways:** Deep roots prevent erosion and polluting stormwater runoff, safeguarding streams, the Chesapeake Bay, and Maryland's famous native Blue Crabs and Rockfish.
- **Support Pollinators & Farms:** Native plants feed bees, butterflies, and insects essential to the production of crops grown for human consumption.
- **Preserve Biodiversity:** Natives sustain our local ecosystems and can reverse the decline of imperiled species like the endangered Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly, our state insect.

Launched in 2022, a program to establish a Native Plant Awareness Month in every state and the District of Columbia was initiated by a national organization, The Garden Club of America. As of 2025, 44 states and DC observe a native plant month by proclamation, with 11 states converting to a permanent law. I encourage Maryland to join these states. By designating every May as Maryland Native Plant Month in perpetuity, your constituents, including nurseries, businesses, schools, nonprofits, government agencies, and others, can plan well in advance to promote education and sales for the growing interest in native plants from year to year.

I appreciate your support and leadership on the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and respectfully urge you to **support SB 229 to designate May as Maryland Native Plant Month in perpetuity.**

Respectfully yours,

*Marlene Smith*



# **SB0229\_Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay\_FAV Commemorative**

Uploaded by: Marlene Smith

Position: FAV



Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay  
15321 Colony Place  
Waldorf, MD 20601  
240-416-7108  
[chesapeakebay@wildoneschapters.org](mailto:chesapeakebay@wildoneschapters.org)

*Deeply rooted in native plants,  
promoting native landscapes  
through education, advocacy and  
collaborative action.*

**Testimony:** SB0229, General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Hearing Date:** March 12, 2026

**Position:** FAVORABLE

Chair - Brian Feldman; Vice Chair, Cheryl Kagan, and honorable members of the Committee:

Located in Southern Maryland, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay<sup>1</sup>, a 71-member chapter of the national organization Wild Ones<sup>2</sup>, strives to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities across Southern Maryland. We **strongly urge you to support this bill** for the benefits it will bring to our local ecosystems, including the native plants and creatures (biodiversity) that call Maryland home. We must take every step we can to save our treasured Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for future generations.

Having a designated Maryland Native Plant Month in May in perpetuity complements the Maryland Native Plants Program (MNPP) created in 2023. The MNPP is providing significant and irreplaceable support to the State's \$2 billion horticultural industry.

Unlike one-time proclamations, a formal Native Plant Month in perpetuity would boost local businesses—nurseries, landscapers, farmers—and empower education and outreach efforts statewide. Legislation ensures lasting impact without spending public funds or adding mandates. By simply choosing to plant a native plant, nearly anyone can help our environment.

Native plants are a simple, sustainable solution to the urgent environmental challenges faced by Maryland, including habitat loss, invasive species, polluted runoff, and climate change:

- **Preserve Biodiversity:** Natives sustain our local ecosystems and can reverse the decline of imperiled species like the endangered Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly, our state insect.
- **Support Pollinators & Farms:** Native plants feed bees, butterflies, and insects essential to the production of crops grown for human consumption.
- **Protect Waterways:** Deep roots prevent erosion and polluting stormwater runoff, safeguarding streams, the Chesapeake Bay, and Maryland's famous native Blue Crabs and Rockfish.

Launched in 2022, a program to establish a Native Plant Awareness Month in every state and the District of Columbia was initiated by a national organization, The Garden Club of America. As of 2025, 44 states and DC observe a native plant month by proclamation, with 11 states converting to a permanent law. I encourage Maryland to join these states. By designating every May as Maryland Native Plant Month in perpetuity, your constituents, including nurseries, businesses, schools, nonprofits, government agencies, and others, can plan well in advance to promote education and sales for the growing interest in native plants from year to year.

I appreciate your support and leadership on the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and respectfully urge you to **support SB 229 to designate May as Maryland Native Plant Month in perpetuity.**

Wildly appreciative of your support for this bill,

*Marlene Smith*, President, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay



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[chesapeakebay@wildoneschapters.org](mailto:chesapeakebay@wildoneschapters.org)

*Deeply rooted in native plants,  
promoting native landscapes  
through education, advocacy and  
collaborative action.*

References:

<sup>1</sup>Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay Chapter, <https://chesapeakebay.wildones.org/>

<sup>2</sup>Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, LTD, a nationwide nonprofit organization with local chapters throughout the country, including 5 chapters in Maryland, <https://wildones.org/>

**MGA - Favorable Letter re SB229.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ruffin

Position: FAV



March 10, 2026

Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
FAVORABLE

Re: SB229 General Provisions - Commemorative Month  
Maryland Native Plant Month

Dear Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

We of Wild Ones Greater Baltimore, together with other Wild Ones chapters across Maryland, write in strong support of reintroducing and passing SB229. SB229 would require the Governor to proclaim each May as Maryland Native Plant Month and urge organizations and businesses to observe it appropriately.<sup>1</sup> This is a no-cost, high-impact way to recognize the work many Marylanders are already doing to restore habitat, protect the Chesapeake Bay, and strengthen climate resilience.

Beyond the obvious environmental benefits that native plants provide, these species make important contributions to people and economies. Studies consistently link access to nearby green space and tree canopy with reduced stress, improved mental health, lower heat-related illness, and higher neighborhood satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> Attractive landscaping with trees and well-designed plantings can also increase property values, strengthen local tax bases, and make our streets more pleasant places.<sup>3,4,5</sup> Native plants specifically are adapted to local conditions, meaning they often require less irrigation and chemical input once established, saving residents money and reducing pollution. Finally, the shade from native trees and shrubs cools neighborhoods and mitigates dangerous heat.<sup>6</sup>

Maryland's natural ecosystems are powerful drivers of the state's economy, and native plants ensure those ecosystems function properly. At a basic level, many native species have deeper roots than introduced species.<sup>7,8,9</sup> Those deep root systems hold soil in place, which reduces erosion and filters out polluted runoff before it reaches streams and the Bay.<sup>10</sup> In turn, Blue Crab and Rockfish habitats are improved, safeguarding the way of life for Marylanders who rely on our waterways.

Native species also store carbon in their roots and surrounding soil. Native grasslands and meadow-style plantings can store carbon as efficiently as non-native trees.<sup>11,12</sup> Those same native species soak up heavy rains, leading to

reduced flooding more effectively than introduced ornamentals and turf grass. This, of course, reduces funds spent on repairing infrastructure and lost productivity.

A formal Native Plant Month also directly supports Maryland's farms. Agriculture is the State's largest commercial industry, employs some 350,000 people, and contributes over \$8 billion annually to our economy.<sup>13</sup> Agriculture is also the State's single largest land use: around 2 million acres, or roughly 32% of total land area.<sup>13</sup> However, at least one-third of food crops depend on pollinators.<sup>14,15</sup> Many North American bees have suffered declines of more than 90 percent due to habitat loss.<sup>16</sup> Restoring that habitat is the most effective tool we have to reverse the loss of pollinators, support crop success, and protect the agricultural economy.

Native plants are equally critical for birds and other wildlife that are enjoyed by Marylanders and ecotourists. Most terrestrial birds feed insects to their young, but the decrease in native plants has resulted in fewer insects. Ultimately, this means fewer birds. The decline in insects has contributed to the loss of nearly three billion breeding birds since 1970 in North America alone.<sup>17,18</sup> Popular non-native trees can support only a handful of insect species, while native species like common oaks and cherries can support hundreds.<sup>19</sup> Maryland's own state insect, the Baltimore Checkerspot, depends on specific native host plants that are threatened.<sup>20,21</sup> Making May Native Plant Month will focus public attention on these connections and encourage residents to turn lawns and vacant spaces into habitat.

Maryland is already involved in the native plant movement through the the Native Plants Program, which promotes native species and certifies nurseries that maintain significant native inventory.<sup>22,23,24</sup> At least 47 states and the District of Columbia have recognized a Native Plant Month, and several have made it permanent by statute.<sup>25,26</sup> Codifying May as Native Plant Month would boost the efforts this legislature has already worked towards, align our state with a national movement, provide an annual focus for education and volunteer events, and support nurseries, landscapers, farmers, schools, and communities. Importantly, these benefits are possible without imposing new mandates or significant costs.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to give a favorable report to SB229, to co-sponsor and champion its passage, and to model participation by celebrating Native Plant Month in your own districts.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Wray

Amanda Wray  
Founder & President  
Katherine Garvey  
Board Member  
Wild Ones  
Greater Baltimore

Marlene Smith

Marlene Smith  
Founder & President  
Wild Ones  
Chesapeake Bay

Jan Knox

Jan Knox  
Founder & President  
Wild Ones  
Greater Frederick

Concetta Gibson

Concetta Gibson  
President  
Wild Ones  
Delmarva

Pru Foster

Pru Foster  
President  
Wild Ones  
Nation's Capital Region

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<sup>23</sup> Univ. of Md. Extension, *Commercial Maryland Native Plant List*.

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<sup>24</sup> Md. Dep't of Nat. Res., *The New Maryland Native Plant Program: Better Resourced for Growers and Gardeners* (June 1, 2025).

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**Kollar Nursesey.Favorable SB229 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler

Position: FAV



Stanley A. Kollar  
Kollar Nursery, LLC  
SB229 - Maryland Native Plant Month  
March 10, 2026  
Maryland Native Plant Month

Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee:

The flora of Maryland was previously represented by a diverse assemblage of over 1,250 species of vascular plants in ecosystems ranging from woodlands to successional fields to unique habitats such as bogs, sand dunes and serpentine barrens.

Many of those species and habitats are in serious decline, or are now functionally absent. Many of our previously common plants such as American chestnut and American elm are nearly gone and our ash and oak trees, flowering dogwoods, arrowwoods, and beeches are currently under attack by nonnative and invasive fungi and insects. Invasive alien plants such as Asiatic bittersweet, tree-of-heaven, Japanese stilt grass and lesser celandine are outcompeting our native species in many places.

At risk is our biological heritage and the stability of our existing forests and other habitats, and the beneficial insects, mammal and bird populations that are dependent upon them. One way to help is to keep the genetic diversity and distribution of our native plant species strong and diverse by encouraging the planting of as many native species as possible.

We can help to draw attention to these concerns and encouraging the citizens of Maryland to plant native plants, turning their gardens and properties into native habitats and refuges.

We support and encourage the adoption of the month of May as "Maryland Native Plant Month"

Respectfully Submitted  
Stanley A. Kollar, Jr.  
Kollar Nursery, LLC  
5200 West Heaps Road  
Pylesville, MD 21132

**MDNativePlantMonth HB217SB229.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler

Position: FAV



# Maryland Native Plant Month Act

Sponsors Delegate Dana Stein and Senator Benjamin Brooks

HB 0217 SB 0229

Permanently designating every May as Maryland Native Plant Month is an **economic driver** for local businesses and an **environmental win** for biodiversity and our declining ecosystems. Encouraging communities and home owners to plant native trees and plants turns a simple idea into big impact - at **zero cost** to taxpayers. Here's how it works:

## Maryland Jobs, Economic Growth & Volunteer Engagement

- **Boosts Local Economy:** Raising awareness of the benefits and importance of native plants will drive demand at wholesale & retail nurseries and garden centers and directly supports the **Dept of Agriculture's Maryland's Best Native Plant Certified Growers Program**;
- **Businesses Certainty:** Predictability of a permanent, recurring month - at the height of planting season - gives growers, retail nurseries, landscapers, design firms & related businesses the confidence needed to hire staff, invest in inventory, and plan promotions to meet growing demand;
- **Promotes Green Jobs & Workforce Development:** supports Maryland's Green Economy and environmental stewardship initiatives - encouraging careers in horticulture, ecological restoration, Green Stormwater Infrastructure & Best Management Practices (nature-based climate solution tools).  
Examples: **Maryland Climate Crew Network, MarylandCorps Service Year Options, & Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps initiatives**;
- **Leverages Value of State-Volunteer Partnerships:** MD volunteers contribute an average value of \$35.53/hr\* in labor. Peak season planting window amplifies the impact of this volunteer workforce saving our state millions of dollars every year. Examples: **DNR's Tree-Mendous Maryland, MD Environmental Trust Land Stewards, & Roots for Resilience** - an Eastern Shore climate adaptation initiative;
- **Community Action:** provides lead time needed to plan engaging, fun & educational activities. Encourages private & community groups to plant pollinator & rain gardens, stream tree buffers, invasive removal projects, community stream cleanups and more.

## Agriculture, Tourism, Clean Waters & Thriving Ecosystems

- **Pollinators & Agriculture:** native bees & pollinators need MD native plants for their food, shelter and habitat. Pollinators are essential to the production of many food crops and loss of native plant habitat is contributing to significant pollinator decline. Planting more natives is the only way to reverse this trend.
- **Maryland waterways & Chesapeake Bay:** the deep & massive fibrous root systems of natives filter excess nutrient & sediment runoff before it enters our waters. Run-off is the biggest source of pollution and threat to our Bay heritage; it can fuel toxic algae blooms & dead zones that smother underwater seagrasses, habitat, fish, blue crabs & all aquatic life. These conditions also **limit recreational water activities**, increase beach closings and necessitate **Unsafe Water Advisories**. To preserve our iconic **\$600M Seafood & \$21B tourism sector**, we need to educate the public. **Awareness** is the first step to changing public behavior;
- **Nature-based modern tools:** natives are foundational to evolving Best Management Practices (BMPs) & Green Stormwater Infrastructure. These nature based practices control erosion, improve soil health, absorb stormwater, reduce costly flood damage, recharge groundwater, & capture CO2 and other air pollutants that harm human health.



# Maryland Native Plant Month Act

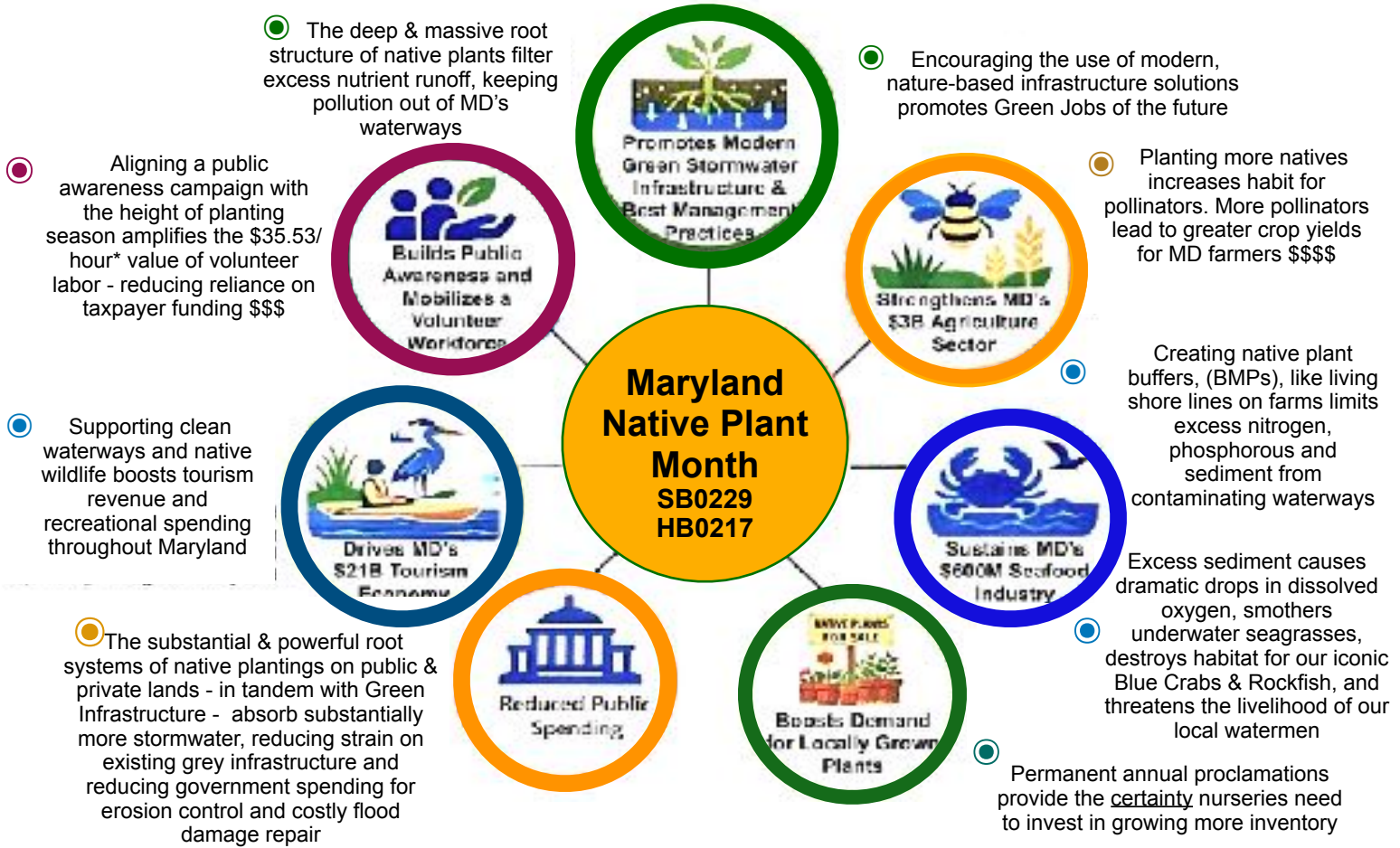
Sponsors Delegate Dana Stein and Senator Benjamin Brooks

HB 0217 SB 0229

**National Momentum:** launched in 2022, a program to establish a **Native Plant Awareness Month** in every state and the District of Columbia was initiated by The Garden Club of America. As of 2025, 44 states and DC observed a native plant month proclamation with **11 states converting it to a permanent law.**

**We ask that Maryland join these states.**

## The Superpowers of Native Plants



**Written Testimony in Favor Senate\_SB229, EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler

Position: FAV

**Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler**

*Lead State Advocate for Native Plant Month*

*Representing All Maryland Clubs of the Garden Club of America*

SB229 - Maryland Native Plant Month March 10, 2026

**FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler. I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of establishing a permanent recurring commemorative Maryland Native Plant Month every May in the state of Maryland.

This initiative began in 2022 when the Garden Club of America launched a national campaign to establish a Native Plant Awareness Month in every state and the District of Columbia. As of 2025, 44 states and DC had observed a native plant month proclamation, with 11 states converting it to permanent law. I am here today to ask that Maryland join them — and to make the case that there has never been a more important moment to do so.

SB 229 is a zero-cost, zero-mandate bill. It creates no new programs and requires no new spending. Instead it creates a permanent, annual statewide marketing campaign — timed to the height of planting season — that gives businesses, community groups, congregations, youth organizations, master gardeners, and watershed stewards a predictable window to plan hands-on, fun & engaging activities such as installing pollinator gardens, rain gardens, tree plantings, and living shorelines. **That public engagement, multiplied across the state every May, generates real and measurable economic and environmental returns.**

**A Strong Economic Case**

A permanent Native Plant Month directly boosts local horticulture businesses — wholesale and retail growers, nurseries, landscapers, and garden centers — by creating predictable annual demand. It supports the Department of Agriculture's Maryland's Best Native Plants Certified Growers Program and keeps nearly every dollar spent in state. Permanent annual proclamations also give nurseries the business certainty they need to invest in growing more inventory and hiring seasonal staff.

Maryland's **seafood** industry is worth **\$600M**. Our **tourism** sector generates **\$21B** and **Maryland's agriculture** sector tops **\$3B**. Every one of these industries depend on clean waterways, healthy pollinators, and thriving ecosystems — and native plants are the 'little engine' that will help keep it all running. *Who knew.....???*

Native plants' deep, fibrous root systems stabilize soils, filter excess nutrients and sediment, and dramatically reduce the runoff that fuels toxic algae blooms and dead zones in our streams, rivers and iconic Chesapeake Bay. Excess nutrient and sediment is one of the biggest contributors to pollution in our waters where it destroys habitat for our world-famous blue crabs, rockfish and seafood: it smothers important underwater seagrasses by

causing rapid drops in dissolved oxygen that deprive our aquatic ecosystems of all life. These destructive conditions are not uncommon and they too often limit recreational water activities, force beach closings, and trigger Unsafe Water Advisories - not good conditions for our tourism sector!

Many Maryland farmers depend on pollinators for crop production. Planting more natives is the single most effective action we can take to reverse pollinator decline and protect the **\$3B agricultural economy** that depends on them.

## **Advancing Governor Moore's Green Jobs of the Future and Workforce Development Goals**

SB 229 directly supports Governor Moore's vision for a thriving Green Economy in Maryland. By raising public awareness of native plants and the practices that depend on them, this bill encourages careers in horticulture, ecological restoration, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, and nature-based Best Management Practices — the climate solution tools of the future. It aligns with and amplifies existing workforce initiatives including the Maryland Climate Crew Network, MarylandCorps Service Year Options, and the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps ( to name just a few). A permanent Native Plant Awareness Month creates an annual pipeline of public interest, volunteer engagement, and community investment that feeds directly into the green workforce Maryland is working to build.

## **A Powerful Environmental Tool — At No Cost to Taxpayers**

Native plants are foundational to modern Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Best Management Practices. Their powerful root systems — in tandem with green infrastructure — absorb substantially more stormwater than conventional landscaping, reducing strain on existing grey infrastructure and minimizing costly government spending on erosion control and flood damage repair. They help recharge groundwater and capture CO2 and other air pollutants that harm human health.

## **Maryland's Extraordinary Volunteer Force**

Maryland is uniquely positioned to leverage this opportunity. Thousands of trained volunteers — master gardeners, watershed stewards, land stewards, and community conservation groups — are already on the ground installing these very practices. DNR and our Climate Resilience agencies already partner with these groups through programs like Tree-Mendous Maryland, MD Environmental Trust Land Stewards, and Roots for Resilience to deliver green infrastructure at a fraction of what it would cost the state. According to the 2025 Independent Sector Report,\* Maryland volunteers contributed labor valued at \$35.53 per hour. A permanent Native Plant Month — aligned with the height of planting season — gives all of these partners a coordinated, statewide campaign to recruit, organize, and multiply their impact every single May, *saving Maryland millions of dollars in labor that would otherwise fall to taxpayers.*

## **Why Now?**

Unfortunately, our coordinated efforts to restore the Bay have underperformed. Federal funding for climate resilience is being eliminated. FEMA disaster relief is being gutted. EPA protections are being rolled back. Maryland cannot afford to wait for Washington.

This bill costs nothing, mandates nothing, and puts the power to protect our environment and our economy directly in the hands of Maryland communities, businesses, and the extraordinary volunteer workforce already doing this work.

SB 229 is a simple, elegant, and powerful idea. It costs the state nothing and delivers everything — cleaner water, healthier ecosystems, stronger local businesses, green jobs, and a more resilient Maryland. I urge this committee to give it a favorable vote.

Respectfully submitted,

**Mary Ellen Pease-Scheeler**

*Lead State Advocate for Native Plant Month*

*Representing All Maryland Clubs of the Garden Club of America*

**SB0229\_Garden Club of America Zone VI\_EEE\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Meredith McDonagh

Position: FAV

SB0229 “Maryland Native Plant Month Act”  
Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
March 12, 2026  
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman and Members of the Committee,

We write in support of a FAVORABLE vote for an annual Native Plant Month in Maryland (SB0229).

The Garden Club of America (GCA) launched a **Native Plant Month Initiative in 2022**, with a goal of formally establishing a Native Plant Month in all 50 United States. As of this writing 33 states and DC have passed proclamations establishing April or May Native Plant Month, and 11 states have passed legislation making Native Plant Month permanent. These states are Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia and West Virginia. We hope that the state of Maryland will pass this permanent, non-partisan legislation.

Native plants are essential for resilient ecosystems. They promote biodiversity, conserve water, contain soil erosion, improve soil health, mitigate climate change and create habitat and food for a variety of wildlife. Establishing a Native Plant Month would encourage the public to learn more about the beautiful and varied plants native to Maryland and will prepare the nursery industry for the growing demand for and interest in native plants and how they benefit the economy, health and sustainability of Maryland’s ecosystems.

As the Garden Club of America Representatives for Conservation and Horticulture in Zone VI, which encompasses Maryland, we represent twelve clubs with nearly 700 members. We hope the EEE Committee will give a FAVORABLE report on SB0229.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Liz Evans*

GCA Zone VI Conservation Chair

*Georgina Horsey*

GCA Zone VI Horticulture Chair

*Meredith McDonagh*

GCA Immediate Past Zone VI Conservation Chair

710 Hampton Lane

Towson, MD 21286

**SB0229\_Halten Garden Club^J Inc.\_EEE\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Meredith McDonagh

Position: FAV

Meredith McDonagh  
710 Hampton Lane  
Towson, MD 21286  
Halten Garden Club

SB0229 “MD Native Plant Month Act”  
March 12, 2026  
Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
Favorable

Dear Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman and Members of the Committee,

As a Baltimore County Master Gardener (BCMG), a Garden Club of America (GCA) Conservation Co-Chair, Immediate Past GCA Zone VI (MD and DC) Conservation and National Affairs and Legislation Representative, member of Federated Garden Clubs of MD and lifelong gardener, I strongly urge you to vote Favorably for SB0229.

SB0228 is important both because it would designate every May as MD Native Plant month, which will put continual and repeated focus on the use of native plants in our landscape and because it is good for our economy. On the one hand, money is generated by sales and growing natives, and keeping this circular loop instate. It will financially benefit recreational activities. And then there is the untold amount of savings to Marylanders by using natives to fight stormwater issues, food production, supporting wildlife (ecological services benefits) versus if we do nothing to add more to our landscape and incur these currently unseen costs.

If we make every May “MD Native Plant Month” we give nurseries the reliability to prepare each year when growing and ordering plants, to be ready with enough stock and signage for consumers. Furthermore, more of the public is learning about and asking for native plants and, in my opinion, would benefit from this annual ‘reminder’ as they come to fully understand, appreciate and choose native plants as much as possible.

For the past few years dedicated Marylanders have worked hard to file a Proclamation with Governor Wes Moore to make a Native Plant Month. But by making permanent public recognition of the benefits of choosing native plants, we can now build on prior MD legislation such as the Maryland Native Program and law on Invasive plants. Eleven other states already have a Native Plant Month; it costs Maryland taxpayers nothing to support SB0229.

The need to focus on native plants is urgent. Native Plants support native wildlife, which is critical not only to food production (pollination) but to resiliency from climate change’s new norms such as extended drought and storm water management. For example, native grasses have roots that extend up to several feet below ground to anchor soil in flood conditions. During drought in my gardens, it was the native plants that fared well. Wildlife depends on native food sources; they literally cannot digest much of the exotic vegetation

that abounds. Homeowners/privately owned land is where our citizens may choose to make a difference for the future. If everyone planted native species, we could possibly make a dent in lost and fragmented habitat and feel like we are doing something to save Nature. When I volunteer for MG and meet young families with children, I see this heartache for a dismal future and the urge to enthusiastically do right by our environment.

Thank you for a favorable vote and for your service to Maryland and its future.

Meredith McDonagh  
Conservation Co-Chair

**2026 - SB0229 - Native Plant Month.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Crump

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY FOR SB 0229

### Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month

### Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

### FAVORABLE

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice-Chair; and the Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Patrick Crump, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network

DATE: March 10, 2026

The Episcopal Church along with many other faith communities endorses responsible stewardship of God’s creation. Our faith teaches us that all creation is interconnected, and the health of our environment directly impacts the well-being of our communities. The Church’s 81st General Convention endorsed the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and seeks to support it on church properties by prioritizing native plant species to reduce irrigation needs and encourage pollinators, and by transforming open grass lawns into native plant meadows.

It is vitally important that Marylanders understand the important role that native plants play in supporting the natural food web, linking insects, birds, plants, animals and humans, with each element playing a role in protecting, sustaining, and growing a balanced, nurturing environment for all.

To illustrate the symbiotic relationship between many insects and plants, adult moths lay eggs on the native plant that historically has been a host to that moth species. The hatched and developing larvae (caterpillars) are able to eat the leaves, develop, survive, and grow into adulthood, to then repeat the cycle. When native plants are replaced with non-natives, these take over the space and use the nutrients to the detriment of the natives. If eggs are laid on a non-native plant, the hatchlings will starve and die. No caterpillars mean no food for nesting/fledging birds, who will starve to death. This is already widely apparent in the sharp decline in numbers of bird populations.

Native plants have long been valued by gardeners. The Maryland Native Plant Month bill serves the valuable purpose of advancing public awareness of the essential role these plants play in sustaining our environment.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network requests a FAVORABLE report.

# **MD Trout Unlimited FAVORABLE findings of HB 0217 S**

Uploaded by: Rich Dennison

Position: FAV



*A Trout Unlimited Gold Chapter*

**RE: HB 0217 SB 0229 – Maryland Native Plant Month – FAVORABLE**

On behalf of over 400 members of Maryland Trout Unlimited, we support a FAVORABLE position for HB 0217 SB 0229. As a cold-water conservation organization, Maryland Trout Unlimited recognizes the value of permanently designating May as Maryland Native Plant Month. This bill will increase the demand for native plants, encouraging the sale and planting of plants native to the climatic, geologic, and soil conditions of Maryland. We hope it will promote Maryland wholesale and retail growers, nurseries and garden centers, supporting local businesses and increasing stock available for purchase. This bill will provide a permanent window and lead time to plan educational activities, allowing MDTU and our teaming partners to organize plantings of riparian buffers, invasive plant removal projects, and community stream cleanups. Native plants and trees, when thoughtfully planted, improve soil health, support our native pollinators, reduce harmful sediment from entering our waterways, and improve air quality by capturing carbon dioxide and air pollutants. We strongly recommend the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 0217 SB 0229.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rich Dennison".

Rich Dennison

Vice President, Maryland Chapter of Trout Unlimited

**SB0229\_CCAN\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susan Cheston

Position: FAV

## **SB0229 - SUPPORT**

From:

The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Fund, Invasive Vines Program Supporters

### **SB0229 - General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month**

March 10, 2026

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

On behalf of The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund and its Invasive Vines Program, **we urge a favorable report on HB0217/SB0229 to support the commemoration of Maryland Native Plant Month.**

CCAN's Invasive Vines Program works with hundreds of volunteers from all over Maryland who have spent hundreds of hours removing invasive plants on both public and private land. The essential follow-up to this important work is to plant native plants in their place. Native plants help protect the Chesapeake Bay by reducing pollution and stormwater run-off, improve agricultural yields with higher crop pollination, and help protect our wildlife, including pollinators.

For three years, Governor Moore has declared the month of May to be Native Plant Month in Maryland. Codifying this commemoration into law will increase public awareness of the importance of native plants while also supporting nurseries and related businesses in our state. Plants don't grow overnight. Nurseries need time to grow plants and bring them to market; having a regularly scheduled Native Plant Month will give nurseries time to prepare to leverage this opportunity at no cost to Maryland taxpayers.

Please help the Chesapeake Bay, local agriculture, wildlife, and pollinators, by supporting Maryland Native Plant Month.

Thank you,

Supporters of The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund

Signed:

1. Alexandra Milentey, Riverdale Park, MD 20737
2. Lucy Duff, Lanham, MD 20706
3. Sashaum Deprez, Hyattsville, MD 20783
4. Gail Davidson, Hyattsville, MD 20784

5. Ramon Tasat, Silver Spring, MD 20910
6. Braden Fink, Easton, MD 21601
7. Jodi Beder, Mount Rainier, MD 20712
8. Marissa Smith, Rockville, MD 20852
9. Rosie Weaver, Greenbelt, MD 20770
10. Brian Gugerty, Arnold, MD 21012
11. Susan Slotnick, Hyattsville MD 290781
12. Dustin Branch, Baltimore, MD 21201
13. Louis Avenilla, Accokeek, MD 20607
14. Mike Guerrieri, Riverdale, MD 20737
15. Dorothy Davidson, Hyattsville, MD 20784
16. Lora Katz, Riverdale, MD 20737
17. Sarah Wayland, Riverdale Park, MD 20737
18. Janet Nackoney, Hyattsville, MD 20781
19. Demian Rybock, Hyattsville, MD 20781
20. Mary Kennedy, Hyattsville MD 20781
21. Whitney Peters, Hyattsville, MD 20781
22. Jackie Marks, Hyattsville, MD 20781
23. Laura Pillsbury, Hyattsville, MD 20781
24. Lucas Wyant, Hyattsville, MD 20781
25. Amy Schachtner-Appel, Hyattsville, MD 20781
26. Sarah Batto, Riverdale, MD 20737
27. Sarah Rothman, Riverdale, MD 20737
28. Claudia Vondrasek, Silver Spring, MD 20901

**SB0229\_FAV\_Cheston.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susan Cheston

Position: FAV

## **SB0229 - SUPPORT**

Susy Cheston  
7117 Sycamore Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
[susy.cheston@gmail.com](mailto:susy.cheston@gmail.com)  
202-549-3656

### **SB0229 - General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month**

January 16, 2026

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

As a longtime Maryland resident and volunteer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN), I urge a favorable report on HB0217/SB0229 to support native plants in Maryland.

My front yard is alive with bees and butterflies. My pandemic project was to yank out invasive plants that wipe out native habitat and replace them with beautiful, hardy native plants that pollinators feast on and that bring joy to everyone who passes by.

This life-giving transformation was NOT helped by Maryland nurseries and garden centers. When I visited garden centers that were very reputable, I noticed more invasive plants for sale than natives. Native plants were often off the main paths and incorrectly labelled, and it was hard to find staff members who could answer basic questions about them. A master gardener working at beloved Homestead Gardens quietly directed me away from their centers and referred me to others that only sold native plants. That's sad!

More and more people are learning how essential pollinators are and the difference individuals can make by planting native plants in their own yards. I would like the Maryland nursery industry to lead in this transformation and to benefit from the business it brings.

A permanent Native Plant Month every May will highlight the importance of planting native plants that help protect the Chesapeake Bay, improve agricultural yields with higher crop pollination, and help protect our wildlife, including pollinators. This bipartisan bill will energize the nursery trade while delivering measurable environmental benefits that help food production and wildlife at zero cost to taxpayers. Please support the commemoration of May as Maryland Native Plant Month.

Thank you,  
Susy Cheston

**SB229.FAVORABLE.ShoreRivers.pdf**

Uploaded by: Zack Kelleher

Position: FAV



## Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 229 – General Provisions -Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month

March 12, 2026

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **SB229** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection organization on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. *Our mission is to protect Maryland's Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, education, and engagement.*

This legislation **requires the Governor to annually proclaim May as Maryland Native Plant Month, and urges education and environmental organizations and businesses to observe this month with appropriate programs, events, and activities.** Maryland already recognizes 20 commemorative days, 7 months, and one week in state law, so this bill will add Maryland Native Plant Month to that list, with no cost to the state. These actions will raise greater awareness about the need for native plants in order to improve local water quality and ecosystem health, and hopefully support local businesses that participate in the programming. For the sake of this bill, native plants are considered plants that were growing in the state of Maryland prior to colonization, which would suggest that they evolved for these specific ecosystems over the course of millions of years.

Utilizing native plants can be one of the most impactful actions that Marylanders can take to start having positive impacts on local water quality and habitat health. **While many policies and practices can take years to have any impact, or impacts that aren't visible, planting native plants and removing invasives species are actions that can be taken almost immediately with some education, at a fairly low cost, and have real tangible benefits to the local community.** Native plants provide a tremendous water quality benefit compared to nonnative or invasive species, and are critical habitat for thousands of native species. One of ShoreRivers' flagship programs is River-Friendly Yards, which works with community members across our territory to increase the amount of native plants on their properties and community spaces using a wide range of educational materials and outreach strategies. This legislation will benefit programs like River-Friendly Yards, because it will cause more people to learn about the importance of native plants, who will then start taking action in their own communities.

We support this bill because it will make native plants more accessible to Marylanders and prioritize their use at the local scale, while improving habitat value and local water quality. We urge the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 229**, and encourage the legislature to support policies that invest in watershed health and resilient natural systems across Maryland.

Sincerely,  
**Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper** on behalf of:

### ShoreRivers

Scott Budden, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

Ben Ford, Miles Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

**SB0229 Maryland Native Plant Month1 docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Miner Brown

Position: FWA

SB 0229

Miner L. (Moe) Brown

FAVORABLE with AMENDMENT

Title: General Provisions-Commemorative Month-Maryland Native Plant Month

Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Chair: Senator Brian J. Feldman and Vice Chair-Senator Cheryl C. Kagan

Sponsored by Senator Brooks and Senator Gile

This testimony is written in [strong support](#) of Senate Bill 0229, General Provisions-Commemorative Month- Maryland Native Plant Month. **One simple amendment would be adding the word "Awareness" in the title after the word Plant.**

My name is Miner L. (Moe) Brown, a 37-year resident of Maryland and District 11B. I am a parent, grandparent, great grandparent, Coordinator of a new Scouting's Citywide Conservation Initiative in Fort McHenry District, Baltimore Area Council, Scouting America encompassing the City of Baltimore, an Eagle Scout & Silver Beaver Awardee, a long-time naturalist guide and Irvine Nature Center's 1<sup>st</sup> Lifetime Achievement Awardee at the Center, a Sierra Club member, and an active member of the Social Justice Committee at our local congregation.

**Our Maryland wildlife are dying; our birdlife is disappearing. They are all depend on native plants for their food and habitat. Our native MD plants (here before colonial settlement) are also seriously threatened** by over-use of pesticides, home-owners planting their landscapes with invasive non-native plants, fields being cleared for housing and other building development, and invasive plants being sold at nurseries that push out native plants. **Some Positive Words** -through the significant efforts of our Department of Agriculture, 13 new invasive plant species have just been listed as prohibited such as Japanese barberry and burning bush, and the next 20 plants for assessment have been announced.

Some planting answers to reversing this downward slope include **native** planting of pollinator gardens, rain gardens, wildflower meadows, canopy trees, and creation of NOMowMay programs at the edges of large mowed lawns to name a few.

**Our public must become much more knowledgeable about these threats to our nature and how to combat them!. For these reasons, I urge the adoption of SB0229.**

# **SB229\_ UME Testimony on General Provisions-Commerat**

Uploaded by: Lisa Kuder

Position: INFO

Testimony: SB229, General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month  
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Hearing Date: March 12, 2026  
Position: Informational

### **Introduction**

The University of Maryland Extension (UME) submits this informational testimony in support of Senate Bill 229, which designates May as Maryland Native Plant Month. This commemorative designation recognizes the ecological, economic, and cultural value of native plants and encourages Marylanders to learn about, celebrate, and incorporate native plants into their landscapes throughout the month of May and beyond.

### **Alignment with the Maryland Native Plant Program**

SB229 aligns closely with the goals and work of the Maryland Native Plant Program (MNPP), a partnership among the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Native Plant Society, and UME. The MNPP promotes the use of native plants in developed landscapes and natural areas. Key parallels between the SB229 and the MNPP include:

**Shared Educational Mission:** Both the commemorative month and the Native Plant Program aim to expand public knowledge about the value and availability of Maryland native plants. The month of May would serve as an annual focal point for outreach efforts, plant sales, workshops, and demonstration events that align directly with the program's objectives.

**Chesapeake Bay Restoration:** Native plant adoption in managed landscapes is a recognized best management practice in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay watershed. The commemorative month reinforces and extends the reach of programs and incentives already in place, inspiring voluntary action at the household and community level.

**Partnership Opportunities:** The month designation creates an organizing framework for state agencies, nonprofits, Extension offices, master gardener programs, and the nursery industry to collaborate on coordinated outreach—amplifying the impact of existing resources and building new partnerships.

### **Importance of Native Plants**

Native plants form the foundation of healthy ecosystems. They provide critical habitat and food sources for native insects, birds, and mammals. Research by entomologist Doug Tallamy has demonstrated that native oaks alone support over 500 species of caterpillars—the primary food source for most nesting songbirds. Non-native ornamental plants, by contrast, support a fraction of this biodiversity. As Maryland continues to face habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss, native plants in residential, commercial, and public landscapes serve as vital ecological corridors.

### **Benefits to Maryland's Nursery & Green Industry**

The designation of Maryland Native Plant Month is not merely symbolic—it carries tangible economic benefits for Maryland's nursery and green industry. Consumer demand for native plants has grown substantially in recent years. A dedicated commemorative month amplifies this momentum.

### **Conclusion**

By designating May as Maryland Native Plant Month, the General Assembly would affirm the significance of native plants—sending a clear signal to citizens, communities, and the green industry that native plants are a priority for the state. Thank you for considering this testimony.

Lisa Kuder  
Native Plants & Landscapes Specialist  
University of Maryland Extension