



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 266

Local Government – Regulatory Powers – Regulation of Invasive Trees

Date: April 1, 2026

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: **Favorable**

From: Gussie Maguire,
MD Staff Scientist

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 266**, which allows counties and municipalities to regulate trees that have been identified by the Department of Agriculture as harmful invasives - including *Ailanthus altissima*, an invasive species commonly called tree of heaven - including prohibiting their sale, planting, or failure to remove. Amendments adopted by the Senate broaden the authority granted by the bill, and will be valuable tools to regulate harmful invasive tree species in Maryland.

Tree of heaven outcompetes native tree and plant species due to its fast growth and production of allelopathic chemicals that prevent other plants from taking root near it. It reproduces via seed and root suckers, thrives in disturbed areas, and is extremely difficult to remove once established. Its leaves and twigs emit an unpleasant odor akin to moldy peanut butter, its pollen can trigger allergies, and in some cases, contact with it can cause skin irritation¹. Furthermore, it is the preferred host for invasive spotted lanternflies, which swarmed much of the state last summer.

CBF supports this bill and looks forward to counties and municipalities making full use of the powers it grants. **CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 266.**

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

¹ Penn State Extension: [Tree of heaven](#)