



Promoting native landscapes through education,  
advocacy and collaborative action.  
Contact:wildonesnationscapital@gmail.com

**Testimony: HB 72; Natural Resources – Edible Forests and Foraging Program - Establishment**

**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Hearing Date: February 4, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Wild Ones Nation's Capital Region Chapter<sup>1</sup>, representing 250 members, requests your support for this bill, subject to three amendments.

Background. The idea of providing the public with an opportunity to harvest food from forests is worthy of consideration. However, it would be too costly to manage it effectively. Few forests remain and those are suffering a myriad of stresses. Further they contain rare, threatened, and endangered species that need protection.

Forests. Establishing and maintaining healthy forests is important for humans and ecosystems worldwide. *"Forests regulate our climate, clean the air we breathe, and filter the water we drink. They also provide habitat for more than two-thirds of terrestrial wildlife and plants. They are one of our most important resources, offering a renewable supply of the materials and goods we need for a more sustainable future."*<sup>2</sup>

Amendments. For those reasons, the bill should only be passed with amendments. 1. Eliminate foraging in forests. Foraging harms ecosystems as foragers step on and crush native plants and compact the soil where creatures live. To make foraging less damaging would require costly Departmental oversight. 2. Create permaculture orchards on non-natural areas such as lawns, playing fields, and agricultural lands that are not regaining their natural states. 3. Limit species in these permaculture orchards to those on the Commercial Maryland Native Plant List.

Please only pass this bill with amendments to protect our forests.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Broadman  
Director, Legislative Affairs

Pru Foster  
President

---

<sup>1</sup> Wild Ones, a nationwide nonprofit organization with local chapters throughout the country.

<sup>2</sup> <https://fsc.org/en/why-forests-matter>