



HB0217: General Provisions – Commemorative Month – Maryland Native Plant Month

Hearing date: 3/17/26

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections (GLE)

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 HB0217 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.

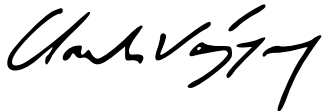
The spring shipping season represents a significant portion of our annual revenue, and having consistent messaging and awareness during that timeframe is synergistic. It benefits us and our partner-growers, like Delmarva Native Plants in Dorchester County. Consumers are eager to plant during this time, 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.

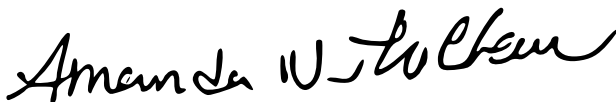
Sincerely,

Claudio Vazquez, co-owner, Izel Native Plants



Signed: 3/13/2026

Amanda McClean, co-owner, Izel Native Plants



Signed: 3/13/2026