

February 7th, 2020**The Maryland House of Delegates
Committee on Health and Government Operations****HB192 Department of General Services – Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2020****Position: Support**

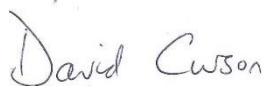
This letter is to express our strong support for HB192 and to underscore just how important this legislation is for declining bird populations, and also for energy conservation, and thus mitigating impacts of climate change. Audubon Maryland-DC is one of 22 state programs of the National Audubon Society with approximately 9,000 members in Maryland.

Building collisions, including window strikes, are responsible for around 1 billion wild bird deaths each year in the United States, which is a significant mortality factor on their populations. Migratory bird species are particularly vulnerable to building collisions because twice each year they travel through unfamiliar territory between their breeding and wintering areas. And it is migratory species that are most in need of conservation. In Baltimore, birds such as Baltimore Oriole and American Woodcock are among the species more often encountered killed or injured by volunteers of Lights Out Baltimore, a project of the Baltimore Bird Club, who regularly patrol buildings known to act as death traps for migratory birds.

Birds are important not only because they have recreational value for birdwatchers but also due to the contribution their popularity makes to the economy. Birds and birding are big business in Maryland. From the Baltimore Birding Weekends to the Delmarva Birding Weekends, and all of the events and festivals in between, tourists spend millions of dollars on wildlife and bird watching in the Free State, one of the most well-known and critical stopovers in the Mid-Atlantic Flyway. In addition to tourists, some 20% of Marylanders identify as birdwatchers, according to the US Department of the Interior. The art and history associated with this flyway make Maryland proud. Nationwide, 47 million birders spend nearly \$107 billion annually on travel and equipment-related expenditures associated with birding. This generates \$13 billion in local, state, and federal tax revenue. These dollars are in addition to the more than 500 million tons of insects the birds eat every year, and the pollination and seed dispersal they provide.

Bird-safe building designs not only reduce bird mortality but also reduced energy costs to building owners, in many cases taxpayers, through energy conservation. This also has the added benefit of mitigating climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Please support this bill.

Sincerely,

David Curson
Interim Executive Director and Director of Bird Conservation