

My name is Josephine Kalbfleisch, and I am 15 years old student from Baltimore county. I am writing to you in regards of House Bill 236, the Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act. I have been following this bill for a long time, going back to 2020 when it was HB192, and was unable to be fully passed. Now that it has been given a new life, I am directing all my efforts to ensure that it is not struck down. It would be much appreciated if you could take a few minutes to read what I have to say:

To be straightforward, I fight for this bill because of my love of birds and my passion to protect them. I believe that it is one of the most important pieces of legislation in terms of wildlife conservation, because even though it mainly focuses on energy reduction it also helps to prevent window strikes of migrating species.

For the past 6 years, birding has been a major part of my life. It has been a place of comfort that I always turn to whenever things feel out of place, or when I feel like my stress has taken over. It has exposed me to incredible opportunities, connecting me with different people from all around the state and country and leading me to develop a love for the outdoors. When you are first exposed to the spectacle of birds, is when you really start to appreciate the biodiversity around you. To set your eyes upon the grand flocks of pumpkin-colored American Avocets in summer or witness the magic of spring and fall migration is a true blessing. Additionally, discovering birding has shown me how many people there are that care just as much as I do. Many only see it as a weird, and uncommon hobby, and do not realize the importance it has in so many communities. It is a way for people of all ages, genders, sexualities, races, and abilities to get together to experience something they love, and a way to truly appreciate nature. For children my age especially, birding is a way to improve someone's mental and physical health, and it help them to establish an identity as an activist. It is my utmost goal to keep these birds safe, and I can guarantee that I am not alone. We must do all in our effort to preserve them, because the health of the organisms in an environment translates to the health of the environment itself. People seem to forget that birds were here before us, and they made this land their home before us. Therefore, it is our responsibility as human beings to care enough to try and protect them.

1 billion birds per year die due to collisions, and 5500 birds have been found both dead in injured in the streets of Baltimore since 2008. If this piece of legislation is passed, we may be able to reduce these numbers, and decrease the pattern of bird deaths in the United States overall. So many people, including myself, my friends, and my family, find joy in birdwatching, and we want to able to give that same joy to future generations. So, with all my utmost respect, I ask you to please give your support to this bill, in hopes that it will have an important impact on our community.

