



State Office
Patterson Park Audubon Center
Important Bird Area Program
2901 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
Tel: 410-558-2473
md.audubon.org

March 29, 2021

The Maryland Senate

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

HB0236 Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2021

Position: Support HB0236

This letter is to express our strong support for HB0236 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 19,000 subscribers 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.

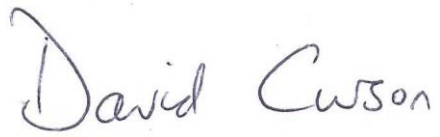
And it is migratory species that are most in need of conservation. In Baltimore, birds such as Baltimore Oriole and American Woodcock are among the species more often encountered killed or injured by volunteers of Lights Out Baltimore, a project of the Baltimore Bird Club, who regularly patrol buildings 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. Each year Maryland residents and tourists from out of state spend millions of dollars on wildlife and bird watching in the Free State, as individuals and on organized ecotourism ventures such as the Baltimore Birding Weekends and Delmarva Birding Weekends. Some 20% of Marylanders identify as birdwatchers, according to the US Department of the Interior.

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 birds eat every year, and the pollination and seed dispersal they provide.

Bird-safe building designs not only reduce bird mortality but also reduce energy costs to building owners through energy conservation. The new technology has become very affordable and New York City has already adopted similar legislation. This also has the added benefit of mitigating climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Please support this bill.

David Curson, PhD

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Curson". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'D' and 'C'.

Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Maryland-DC