

SB178_MDSierraClub_fav 31Jan2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Carolyn Parsa

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Finance

Testimony on: SB 178 “State Highway Administration – Vegetation Management – Pollinator Habitat Plan”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 31, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB 178, which would significantly increase habitat for pollinators through minor adjustments to vegetation management more than 5,200 miles of state roads. The bill will help reverse widespread declines in populations of pollinating insects – such as bees and butterflies – that are essential to our fruit and vegetable crops and to nearly 90 percent of our wild trees, shrubs, and flowers.¹

In North America, nearly a third of all bumblebee species are threatened with extinction as are twenty percent of butterflies. Three of Maryland’s 15 bumblebee species have disappeared from the state and three others are now rare.² In Ohio, the number of butterflies counted in any one year has dropped by one third over 21 years.³ A major cause of these declines is a widespread shortage of flowers and habitats that these pollinators require, both of which well-managed roadsides can provide.

In 2016, Maryland began addressing these declines by enacting the Pollinator Habitat Plans Act, which required three state agencies to develop plans to increase pollinator habitat on their lands. As part of that effort, the Department of Transportation’s State Highway Administration (SHA) commissioned a study to determine whether vegetation along state roadways could be managed in such a way as to provide pollinator habitat.⁴

This three-year study on state roadsides in Frederick and Carroll Counties showed that, with minor adjustments to vegetation management, roadsides can support pollinators with shelter, nesting sites, pollen, and nectar while helping to connect fragmented habitats. Even small areas managed for pollinators produced 68 species of native plants and supported 83 species of native bees, almost half of the known bees in either county. The study concluded that these practices show “great potential in supporting pollinators” and are “are timely and practical to implement on a landscape scale.”

¹ F. Sánchez-Bayo and K. A.G. Wyckhuys, “Worldwide decline of the entomofauna: A review of its drivers,” *Biological Conservation*, vol 232, 2019, 8-27.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0006320718313636>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jul/25/the-insect-apocalypse-our-world-will-grind-to-a-halt-without-them>

² <https://www.marylandbiodiversity.com/checklist/?genus=Bombus>

³ [Butterflies are disappearing in Ohio. Here’s what that means for insects everywhere | PBS NewsHour](#)

⁴ Kuder, Lisa, [Evaluating Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management \(IRVM\) Techniques to Improve Pollinator Habitat \(State Highway Administration and Department Of Entomology, University Of Maryland, 2019\).](#)

SB 178 addresses this problem by requiring SHA to (a) develop a pollinator habitat plan specifically for roadsides (strengthening their current plan focused on rest stops, welcome centers, and office buildings); (b) use pollinator-friendly plants along state roads; and (c) follow the Federal Highway Administration guidelines on roadside pollinator habitats.⁵

The bill also requires SHA to track federal programs that provide grants for roadway pollinator habitats and apply for them when appropriate. Finally, SHA would be required to engage in educational efforts through signage, its website and social media, and outreach to organizations and elected officials.

Six states are already working together (since 2014) to create a “Monarch highway” along I-35 crossing Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota.⁶ In January 2024, the federal Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021 went into effect, requiring the U.S. Dept. of Transportation to provide grants to states such as Maryland to fund pollinator-friendly practices along highways.⁷

For all these reasons, we believe SB178 has outstanding potential. We urge the Committee to support this bill and recommend its passage by the General Assembly.

Michael Wilpers
Natural Places Committee
wilpersm@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

⁵https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/ecosystems/Pollinators_Roadsides/BMPs_pollinators_landscape.s.aspx

⁶<https://monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/who-are-you/departments-of-transportation/monarch-highway>

⁷<https://www.nrdc.org/bio/daniel-raichel/infrastructure-bill-boosts-bees-butterflies>.

SB0178_Pollinator_Habitat_Plan_MLC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0178
AGRICULTURE – POLLINATOR HABITAT PLAN – REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Klausmeier

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0178 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Pollinator populations have been declining for some time due to habitat loss and use of pesticides. In order to protect one of the most basic building blocks of our food system, we should be prioritizing habitats and protections for pollinators.

This bill, if enacted, would require development and maintenance of pollinator habitat areas along state highways and encourage the use of pollinator-friendly native plants in the development of those habitat areas. It would also require the State Highway Administration to track and evaluate Federal programs that provide funding for pollinator habitats, native plants, and invasive species control and to apply for appropriate Federal funding. It also requires the State Highway Administration to update a pollinator habitat plan by October of this year.

Our members understand that we have to protect pollinators. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB 178 - CBF - FAV .pdf

Uploaded by: Doug Myers

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 178

Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

Date: January 31, 2024

To: Senate Finance and Education, Energy
& the Environment Committees

Position: **Favorable**

From: Doug Myers
Maryland Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 178 which requires the State Highway Administration to develop pollinator habitat plans for Rights Of Way, seek federal funding to implement plans, and provide public educational signage about the importance of pollinator habitat.

Pollinators like bees, butterflies, bats, and certain bird species are integral to the biodiversity of the planet and necessary for many food crops such as fruits and vegetables. Development has fragmented or eliminated much pollinator habitat, especially in urban and suburban areas containing high densities of roads. Maryland's I-95 corridor as part of a multi-state megalopolis contributes to that loss, especially for migrating pollinators like monarch butterflies.

Highway rights of way, including cloverleaf highway exchanges, stormwater management ponds and roadside ditches provide significant greenspace upon which the state can re-establish pollinator habitat and control invasive species through the planting of native trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs. As these native habitats develop, maintenance costs will go down, especially for mowing turf, which emits large amounts of greenhouse gases. Adopting SB 178 and taking advantage of federal dollars aimed at restoring native pollinator habitat is a wise step in implementing the state's greenhouse gas reduction pathway that can also improve water quality and the diversity of life sustained within Maryland.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 178.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

Arundel Rivers Testimony FAV SB178 Pollinator Habi

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



PO Box 760 Edgewater, MD
21037

410-224-3802
www.arundelrivers.org

Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 178 – Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

Senate Finance Committee
January 31, 2024

Dear Madam Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB178**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Senate Bill 178 will require the State Highway Administration (SHA) develop a pollinator habitat plan and encourage the use of pollinator-friendly native plants and maintenance practices along the 18,000 miles of roadside maintained by the State.

We have seen significant declines in pollinators and other wildlife species, highlighting the need for more native plant species that are critical in the food web and necessary for the survival of pollinator species.¹ Native plant species also provide a benefit to our local water quality. Native plants often have more extensive root systems and require less fertilizer than non-native species, resulting in improved downstream and riparian water quality due to less nutrient loading. Arundel Rivers Federation encourages residents within our watersheds to plant native species through our Bay Loving Landscapes Program. This bill will directly support that program by prioritizing native plant species being properly maintained and prioritized along state highways – a perfect location for pollinator-friendly plant species.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports expanding and protecting pollinator habitat to improve native plant habitats and local water quality and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT on SB178**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

¹ Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "What's the Buzz: All About Pollinators"
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wawhatsthebuzz.aspx>

ACT Testimony - SB178.pdf

Uploaded by: Gabrielle Ross

Position: FAV



SB0178 – Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration January 29, 2024 Position: Favorable

Assateague Coastal Trust (ACT) is an environmental advocacy organization on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Since 1970, ACT has been a voice for Delmarva's waterways and continues to defend its mission to promote and encourage the protection of the health, productivity, and sustainability of the waters of Lower Delmarva through advocacy, education and conservation.

I am writing to express my **SUPPORT** for **SB178**, which seeks to improve the process for the establishment and maintenance of pollinator habitats along state highways in Maryland. As a concerned advocate for environmental health, I believe this bill presents a critical opportunity to protect and promote the health of pollinators which are crucial contributors to ecosystems and our food supply.

Pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and other insects, play an indispensable role in our agricultural systems by facilitating the reproduction of flowering plants. However, their populations have been in decline due to habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change. Addressing these challenges requires proactive measures to create and maintain habitats that support pollinator populations, ensuring their resilience and biodiversity.

Senate Bill 0178 mandates the establishment of a comprehensive pollinator habitat plan by the State Highway Administration, outlining best management practices for the identification, maintenance, and enhancement of pollinator habitat areas along state highways. By incorporating policies to encourage the use of pollinator-friendly native plants, addressing the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, and educating the public about the importance of pollinator habitats, this bill represents a positive step towards pollinator protection.

Furthermore, the bill requires the administration to track and evaluate federal programs providing funding for pollinator habitats, native plants, and invasive species control, and to apply for such funding when appropriate. This stance not only demonstrates Maryland's commitment to environmental stewardship but will also ensure resources to support these pollinator habitat initiatives.

Regular updates to the pollinator habitat plan, as mandated by the bill, ensure accountability and transparency in the administration's efforts, allowing for continuous improvement. **By providing information on current policies, procedures, and the locations of maintained habitat areas, the State Highway Administration can engage with stakeholders and foster a collaborative approach to pollinator conservation.**

In conclusion, Senate Bill 0178 presents a positive opportunity for Maryland to lead by example in pollinator conservation efforts. By enacting this legislation, we can take meaningful steps to protect pollinator populations, preserve biodiversity, and ensure the sustainability of our ecosystems for future generations. I urge the committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB178** for the benefit of Maryland's environment and agricultural heritage.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Taylor Swanson,
Assateague Coastkeeper, on behalf of Assateague Coastal Trust.



SB0178 ABC letter of support.pdf

Uploaded by: Hardy Kern

Position: FAV



The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair: Finance Committee
The Honorable Senator Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair: Finance Committee

CC:

The Honorable Senator Artuher Ellis
The Honorable Senator Dawn Gile
The Honorable Senator Anotonio Hayes
The Honorable Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
The Honorable Senator Benjamin Kramer
The Honorable Senator Clarence Lam
The Honorable Senator Johnny Mautz
The Honorable Senator Justin Ready
The Honorable Senator Alonzo Washington

29 January 2024

Subject: American Bird Conservancy strongly supports SB0718

Dear Senators,

American Bird Conservancy, which works to conserve birds and their habitats across the Americas, strongly supports SB0718, Senator Klausmeier's Pollinator Habitat Plan Requirements for State Highway Administration bill. The bill does a marvelous job of supporting Maryland's vital infrastructure while recognizing the potential held by roadside areas to support species and ecosystem services.

Maryland's unique position on the Eastern Seaboard, as well as habitat diversity inland, makes it an important state for migratory birds of all species. The Red Knots and other seabirds which visit its shores and estuaries, the Eagles which fish and roost along the Chesapeake, and the state bird, the Baltimore Oriole, and its relatives which rely on the fields, forests, and farms throughout the western part of Maryland are facing ever greater challenges.

As we have developed natural areas, wildlife has struggled to keep up in many cases. Birds, however are incredibly resilient when provided with the correct resources. **Studies have found that bird species richness in a given area is greater where there is a healthy roadside environment.**ⁱ Roadside habitats are also important corridors for wildlife, connecting existing habitats and making safe passage and migration possible.

The neonicotinoid prohibition outlined in section 2(v) are of particular interest to American Bird Conservancy; they address the overwhelming problem of neonicotinoid insecticides negatively impacting wildlife when used as sprays, seed coatings, and on plants or seedlings purchased and installed in landscaping. **Every year, as many as 67 million birds are killed by pesticides.**ⁱⁱ Even more are lost when invertebrate prey they rely upon are killed by pesticide exposure or do not have adequate habitat.

SB0178 will not only enhance the natural beauty of Maryland, it has real economic benefits. **Wildlife-associated recreation brings over \$1 billion to the state annually,**ⁱⁱⁱ which will be bolstered by more wildlife-friendly



roadside habitats. SB0178's provisions would decrease the cost of roadside maintenance via reduced mowing, reduced herbicide use, and reduced future costs of habitat restoration or pollution clean-up.

American Bird Conservancy strongly supports SB0178 and urges favorable committee reports and cosponsorship of the bill.

With any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Hardy Kern III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "E" and "K".

E. Hardy Kern III
Director of Government Relations
American Bird Conservancy

ⁱ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969721065566>

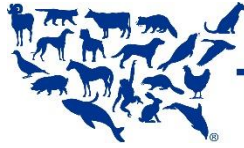
ⁱⁱ https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr191/psw_gtr191_1065-1070_mineau.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.parksandtrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Economy-Handout-web.pdf>

SB178_FAV_HSUS.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

January 31, 2024

Finance Committee

SB 178

Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), on behalf of our Maryland supporters, strongly supports Senate Bill 178, which would set certain requirements for the State Highway Administration regarding the creation and implementation of pollinator and wildlife-friendly vegetation management areas along state highways.

People, neighborhoods, and entities across the state are choosing to replace conventional turf grass with native plants that better support pollinators and wildlife. Creating more sustainable strips of habitat benefits not just the animals, but also leads to a healthier environment, as these spaces support a robust ecosystem without the need for widespread application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides nor the intensive use of gas-powered landscaping tools to manage them. Creating more sustainable strips of habitat benefits not just animals, but also leads to a healthier environment, as these spaces support a robust ecosystem without the need for widespread application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides nor the intensive use of gas-powered landscaping tools to manage them.

The legislature has recognized the critical value of pollinator and wildlife-friendly habitat management by protecting an individual's rights to create natural spaces in their own yards within communities. This bill simply extends that valuable concept by requiring the implementation of pollinator friendly vegetation along state highways – a significant amount of land given the acreage that SHA manages along our roadsides. Because highways stretch across entire regions of the state as well as crisscross different habitats and ecosystems, managing these areas to increase native plant habitat not only increases support for pollinators but will enhance the health of our state lands and reduce the damage to ecosystems including pollinators across the state.

We thank the committee for its consideration of this legislation and request a favorable vote on SB178.

SB178_Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for S

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



Committee: Finance
Testimony on: SB178 - Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration
Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 31, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB178. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB178.

Habitat loss and fragmentation are the greatest threats to Maryland’s pollinators (i.e., bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, beetles, and flies). Climate change will further stress our state’s pollinators. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) manages over 50,000 acres of roadside areas outside of the paved surfaces, including forests, meadows, wetlands, and waterways, which provides a great opportunity to plant and manage pollinator–friendly native plants along state highways.

SB178 will strengthen existing law by requiring SHA’s Pollinator Habitat Plan (Plan) to include policies and procedures to encourage the use of pollinator–friendly native plants along state highways; develop and maintain them, to the extent feasible and in accordance with relevant safety standards for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians; and educate and communicate with the public about these pollinator habitat areas, including informational signs, information on the website and in social media, and outreach to community associations and elected officials. The bill also requires SHA to track and evaluate federal programs that provide funding for pollinator habitats, native plants, and invasive species control and to apply for funding as appropriate and beneficial to pollinator habitats. Finally, SHA must update the Plan annually and publish it on the SHA website, along with a list of the location and approximate size of current pollinator habitat areas maintained.

The Maryland Environmental Service Pollinator Protection Plan “recommends that the single most effective action that can be taken to boost healthy populations of both resident wild bees and domestic honey bees is to plant native wildflower habitat.”¹ Because SHA manages

¹ [Maryland Environmental Service Pollinator Habitat Plan](#), November 2018, page 7.

considerable roadside habitat, it can be developed and managed for the benefit of pollinators. SB178 strengthens the requirements for SHA to plant and manage pollinator-friendly native plants along state highways, to educate the public about their efforts, and to report progress annually.

We strongly support SB178 and urge a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

350MoCo
Adat Shalom Climate Action
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
Chesapeake Earth Holders
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Climate Parents of Prince George's
Climate Reality Project
ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition
Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
Echotopia
Elders Climate Action
Fix Maryland Rail
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
HoCoClimateAction
IndivisibleHoCoMD
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Mobilize Frederick
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Mountain Maryland Movement
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Progressive Maryland
Safe & Healthy Playing Fields
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
WISE

SB0178.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Loll

Position: FAV



SB0178 – Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

Testimony before the Maryland Senate Committee for Finance

January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

Ms. Chair, Ms. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michael Loll, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We provide written testimony today in strong support of SB 178, which requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to expand roadside pollinator habitat and make significant improvements to its current pollinator conservation program.

Declining pollinator species have been documented throughout the world (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/08/210816112104.htm>). With pesticide use and climate change, habitat loss is cited as one of the major causes of pollinator destruction. In response to this problem the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 132 in 2016 and HB 830 in 2017 to use public lands for pollinator habitat enhancement.

Unfortunately, despite the state's best efforts, pollinator decline in Maryland and the United States has only accelerated. Therefore, SB 178 is now introduced:

- To ramp up roadside habitat expansion at a faster rate
- To provide more maintenance for said habitat
- To provide outreach and educational opportunities for communities impacted by roadside pollinator habitat. This may involve working with community associations and updating educational information about pollinators on the SHA and other state government websites.
- To mandate that the SHA tracks and evaluates federal funding for pollinator habitats, native plants, and invasive species control to fund some of these efforts.

It may be necessary to spend money initially to set up additional habitat, but in the long term it is expected that these areas will need less mowing and pesticides, thereby reducing long term maintenance costs.

Thank you for your time and attention.

We encourage a favorable report.

Michael Loll
Columbia, MD

SB178_MOS testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robin Todd

Position: FAV



January 29, 2024

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway 3 Administration

Position: Support: SB178

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee

I write on behalf of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) in strong support of SB178.

Insectivorous birds, such as warbler, vireos, flycatchers, and swallows, are in severe decline throughout the country (as are many other groups of birds; see Rosenberg *et al*, 2019). One of the likely causes is the great spread of invasive plants since they host many fewer insect herbivores, notably caterpillars, than do native plants. This results in less insect food for birds (Tallamy, 2007). Invasive plants are thus akin to ecological AstroTurf. HB22 will push back against the spread of invasive plants by requiring the planting of native species of plants along our highways and the control of invasive ones. The planting of native plants will thus benefit the birds and the bees!

Accordingly, we ask that the Environment and Transportation Committee give a favorable report on SB178.

MOS is a Maryland-based volunteer organization, founded in 1945, and now with some 2000 members, organized into 15 chapters throughout the state. MOS is devoted to the study, conservation and enjoyment of birds that spend at least part of their lives in Maryland. It is notable that MOS members are interested in butterflies, moths, native bees and other pollinators as well as birds.

Sincerely,

Robin G. Todd PhD

Conservation Chair, Maryland Ornithological Society

Robin.todd@mdbirds.org
10174 Green Clover Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042

References: see page 2.

References:

Rosenberg, K.V. *et al.*, 2019, Decline of North American Avifauna, *Science*, 366, pp. 120-124
Tallamy, D.W. 2007. *Brig Nature Home*, Timber Press (358 pp)

SB178-SmartOnPesticidesCoalition_Fav[17240].pdf

Uploaded by: Steve McDaniel

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SB 178
Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan –
Requirements for State Highway Administration

January 31, 2023

Committee: Finance

Submitted by: Smart on Pesticides Coalition of 114 organizations and businesses including 23 Maryland beekeepers who signed on in support.

Position: In Support of SB 178

Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

We represent a coalition of 114 organizations and businesses, including 7 beekeeping clubs plus a group of beekeepers who have signed on to this testimony.

Maryland's bees and wild insect pollinators are *still* in serious trouble, and so are beekeepers as a result of unsustainable continuing honeybee losses. One of the **measures we have of how bad insect pollinators are declining in Maryland** is through the Bee Informed Partnership's annual survey of managed honeybee hive losses. [Maryland losses for 2022-23 were reported at 48.47%](#) by Bee Informed's latest survey. Worse, Maryland's **bee losses have hovered near 50% hive mortality year after year for more than a decade** – 10% losses are the threshold for maintaining sustainable managed bees. But wild pollinators, who provide the largest part of pollination services, are more vulnerable because many are dependent on specific cultivars or native plants for food.

All of these **pollinators provide a vital role in our food security**: Maryland's Dept. of Agriculture states on its website that **pollination is needed for crops valued at over \$400 million in our state**.

Managed honeybees are "the canaries in the coal mine" for many other critically important pollinating species, insect and bird alike. **Bird advocates report similar alarming declines in bird species**.

SB178 takes a crucial step forward by building upon Maryland's 2017 Pollinator Habitat Law by increasing pesticide-free forage and safe native species habitat along our state's roadways. This will benefit Maryland's more than 400 insect pollinators and bird species, while reestablishing key native plant species, which will in turn benefit the health of crops, forests, and ecosystems. The bill also wisely directs the agency to investigate federal programs and other sources of funding to help accomplish this very needed restoration.

A favorable vote for this bill **takes a crucial step toward aiding hundreds of declining pollinating species, including our state's beleaguered honeybees, the health of Maryland ecosystems, and ultimately will protect our food supply**.

Please support SB178 with a favorable vote.

Thank you,

Stephen McDaniel,

Master Beekeeper, Past President, Md. State Beekeepers Assoc., Central Md. Beekeepers Assoc., Carroll Co. Beekeepers Assoc., McDaniel Honey Farm, mail@mcdanielhoneyfarm.com

Bonnie Raindrop,

Coordinator, [Smart on Pesticides Coalition](#) of 114 organization and businesses, raindrop@mdpestnet.org

(Beekeeper signers, next page)

We, the undersigned 23 Maryland beekeepers support SB178:

Beth Wehrle, beekeeper, hobby beekeeper, 21617, bethwehrle@gmail.com
Bonnie Raindrop, beekeeper, member Central Md Beekeepers Assoc., 21214, bonnieraindrop@gmail.com
Carl Miller, Beekeeper, member, Susquehanna Beekeepers Assoc., 21087, carlmiller386@gmail.com
Carla Guarraia, Beekeeper, member, Central Md. Beekeepers Assoc., Park School Beekeeping Club, 21117, carla21228@gmail.com
Edwin Berkinshaw, President, Dr. B, Æs Bees, 21401, berkinshaw@gmail.com
Evan Ponton, gardener, St. Francis of Assisi Church, 21218, evan.ponton@archbalt.org
Gary Appel, Beekeeper, Ree's Bees Apiary, 21014, garyappel33@gmail.com
Gerald Lutskus, HCBA, Harford Honey, 20723, gjlceprt@gmail.com
Gine Rosso, beekeeper, member Howard Co. Beekeepers Assoc., 21738, ginarosso@me.com
Hannah Byron, Member, St. George's Garden Club, 21117, hannahbyron@comcast.net
Janice Colvin, beekeeper,, 21921, janicecolvin123@yahoo.com
Joanna Reed, Beekeeper and Owner, Frizzellburg Apiary, 21102, jsreed99@gmail.com
John Casper, Member, Montgomery Count Beekeepers Association, 20850, johncasper33@gmail.com
Laura Kabernagel, Beekeeper, Apiary, 21047, laurakabernagel@aol.com
Laura M. Evans, Backyard beekeeper, Laura, Æs Bees, 21228, laura.evans00@gmail.com
Lisa Reichenbach, Backyard beekeeper, Central Maryland Beekeepers Association, 21204, lisareichenbach@yahoo.com
Louise Wright, Beekeeper, Bee More Kind Apiary; member CMBA, 21214, louisew@gmail.com
Maureen Connors, Member, Central Maryland Bee Association, 21093, maureen.connors@hotmail.com
Mimi Bennett, Beekeeper and business, Really Raw Honey, Inc, 21224, mimi@reallyrawhoney.com
Robert Crouse, Beekeeper, member MSBA, EAS, SBA, Dogwood Apiary, 21015-2502, rlcrouse@qis.net
Stephanie Gold, Beekeeper and club member, Central Md Beekeepers Assoc, 21117, stephaniegold32@gmail.com
Stephen McDaniel, Master Beekeeper, Past President MSBA, CMBA, CCBA, McDaniel Honey Farm, 21102, steve@mcdanielhoneyfarm.com
Vicki Rummel, beekeeper, Golden Girls Apiary, 21236, goldengirlsapiary@gmail.com

SOPC Testimony for SB178.pdf

Uploaded by: Steve McDaniel

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SB 178
Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan –
Requirements for State Highway Administration

January 31, 2023

Committee: Finance

Submitted by: Smart on Pesticides Coalition of 114 organizations and businesses Including XXX number of beekeepers who signed on in support.

Position: In Support of SB 178

Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

We present a coalition of 114 organizations and businesses, including 7 beekeeping clubs plus a group of beekeepers who have signed on to this testimony.

Maryland's bees and wild insect pollinators are *still* in serious trouble, and so are beekeepers as a result of unsustainable continuing honeybee losses. One of the **measures we have of how bad insect pollinators are declining in Maryland** is through the Bee Informed Partnership's annual survey of managed honeybee hive losses. [Maryland losses for 2022-23 were reported at 48.47%](#) by Bee Informed's latest survey. Worse, Maryland's **bee losses have hovered near 50% hive mortality year after year for more than a decade** – 10% losses are the threshold for maintaining sustainable managed bees. But wild pollinators, who provide the largest part of pollination services, are more vulnerable because many are dependent on specific cultivars or native plants for food.

All of these **pollinators provide a vital role in our food security**: Maryland's Dept. of Agriculture states on its website that **pollination is needed for crops valued at over \$400 million in our state**.

Managed honeybees are "the canaries in the coal mine" for many other critically important pollinating species, insect and bird alike. **Bird advocates report similar alarming declines in bird species**.

SB178 takes a crucial step forward by building upon Maryland's 2017 Pollinator Habitat Law by increasing pesticide-free forage and safe native species habitat along our state's roadways. This will benefit Maryland's more than 400 insect pollinators and bird species, while reestablishing key native plant species, which will in turn benefit the health of crops, forests, and ecosystems. The bill also wisely directs the agency to investigate federal programs and other sources of funding to help accomplish this very needed restoration.

A favorable vote for this bill **takes a crucial step toward aiding hundreds of declining pollinating species, including our state's beleaguered honeybees, the health of Maryland ecosystems, and ultimately will protect our food supply**.

Please support SB178 with a favorable vote.

Thank you,

Stephen McDaniel,

Master Beekeeper, Past President, Md. State Beekeepers Assoc., Central Md. Beekeepers Assoc., Carroll Co. Beekeepers Assoc., McDaniel Honey Farm, mail@mcdanielhoneyfarm.com

Bonnie Raindrop,

Coordinator, [Smart on Pesticides Coalition](#) of 114 organization and businesses, raindrop@mdpestnet.org

(Beekeeper signers, next page)

We, the undersigned 23 Maryland beekeepers support SB178:

Beth Wehrle, beekeeper, hobby beekeeper, 21617, bethwehrle@gmail.com
Bonnie Raindrop, beekeeper, member Central Md Beekeepers Assoc., 21214, bonnieraindrop@gmail.com
Carl Miller, Beekeeper, member, Susquehanna Beekeepers Assoc., 21087, carlmiller386@gmail.com
Carla Guarraia, Beekeeper, member, Central Md. Beekeepers Assoc., Park School Beekeeping Club, 21117, carla21228@gmail.com
Edwin Berkinshaw, President, Dr. B, Æs Bees, 21401, berkinshaw@gmail.com
Evan Ponton, gardener, St. Francis of Assisi Church, 21218, evan.ponton@archbalt.org
Gary Appel, Beekeeper, Ree's Bees Apiary, 21014, garyappel33@gmail.com
Gerald Lutskus, HCBA, Harford Honey, 20723, gjlceprt@gmail.com
Gine Rosso, beekeeper, member Howard Co. Beekeepers Assoc., 21738, ginarosso@me.com
Hannah Byron, Member, St. George's Garden Club, 21117, hannahbyron@comcast.net
Janice Colvin, beekeeper,, 21921, janicecolvin123@yahoo.com
Joanna Reed, Beekeeper and Owner, Frizzellburg Apiary, 21102, jsreed99@gmail.com
John Casper, Member, Montgomery Count Beekeepers Association, 20850, johncasper33@gmail.com
Laura Kabernagel, Beekeeper, Apiary, 21047, laurakabernagel@aol.com
Laura M. Evans, Backyard beekeeper, Laura, Æs Bees, 21228, laura.evans00@gmail.com
Lisa Reichenbach, Backyard beekeeper, Central Maryland Beekeepers Association, 21204, lisareichenbach@yahoo.com
Louise Wright, Beekeeper, Bee More Kind Apiary; member CMBA, 21214, louisew@gmail.com
Maureen Connors, Member, Central Maryland Bee Association, 21093, maureen.connors@hotmail.com
Mimi Bennett, Beekeeper and business, Really Raw Honey, Inc, 21224, mimi@reallyrawhoney.com
Robert Crouse, Beekeeper, member MSBA, EAS, SBA, Dogwood Apairy, 21015-2502, rlcrouse@qis.net
Stephanie Gold, Beekeeper and club member, Central Md Beekeepers Assoc, 21117, stephaniegold32@gmail.com
Stephen McDaniel, Master Beekeeper, Past President MSBA, CMBA, CCBA, McDaniel Honey Farm, 21102, steve@mcdanielhoneyfarm.com
Vicki Rummel, beekeeper, Golden Girls Apiary, 21236, goldengirlsapiary@gmail.com

SB 178 - MoCo_DEP_FAV (GA 24).pdf

Uploaded by: Steven Shofar

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 178

DATE: January 31, 2024

SPONSOR: Senator Klausmeier

ASSIGNED TO: Finance

CONTACT PERSON: Steven Shofar (steven.shofar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support (Department of Environmental Protection)

Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) supports Senate Bill 178. Senate Bill 178 requires the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to develop a pollinator plan that encourages the use of pollinator-friendly native plants along State highways. The plan will include policies for educating and communicating with the public about pollinator habitat areas. The bill requires SHA to apply for federal funding that supports pollinator habitat, native plants, and invasive species control. The bill also requires SHA to annually update the plan.

SHA controls many acres of land in the State through its rights-of-way. As such, SHA is a land steward and it is incumbent that the Administration recognize the environmental impact of its land management practices on pollinators. Indeed, rights-of-way are not only transportation corridors for people but also pollinators. Pollinators are under environmental pressure from loss of habitat, chemical applications and other land management practices including land conversion, frequent mowing, salt, and allowing Non-Native Invasives to eradicate pollinator plant habitats.

Hopefully, SHA is planting native plants indigenous to Ecoregion III, as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency with preference for those found naturally in the mid-Atlantic Region. In order to appropriately issue planting work, SHA should develop a pollinator plan for its properties along State highways. Resources for this work have already been developed such as the Pollinator Partnership's *Selecting Plants for Pollinators – A Regional Guide for Farmers, Lands Managers and Gardeners Central Appalachian Broadleaf Forest, Coniferous Forest and Meadow Province*.

Based on the assurance that the State Highway Administration as a policy plants only native or non-invasive species, DEP requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 178.

SB178 Testimony_ShoreRivers_SUPPORT Finance Commit

Uploaded by: Zack Kelleher

Position: FAV



Testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB178– Pollinator Habitat Plan –Requirements for State Highway Administration

January 31, 2024

Dear Chairwoman Beidle and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **SB178** on behalf of ShoreRivers and the organizations listed below. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland’s Eastern Shore with more than 2,500 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

This bill will require the State Highway Administration to improve and increase the amount of viable habitat for pollinator species in roadside areas by developing a Pollinator Habitat Plan. Pedestrian and motorist safety will be factored into this plan to ensure that these plantings do not adversely impact the safety of state roads. A major component of this bill will be a focus on outreach and educating visitors, residents, and local officials on the need for this type of restoration and the value it creates for the local environment. Federal funds are available for the installation of these types of practices, so this effort will not have a high fiscal note.

Annual reports released by the State Highway Administration show that about 66% of state traffic travels on state roads and 17% of the roadways in the state are owned and operated by the state. This means there is significant restoration potential along these roadways, and a tremendous amount of people who travel on these roads who will be educated about these practices through signage and other outreach means.

At a time when available habitat for pollinators is decreasing every day, Maryland needs to provide as many incentives and protections as possible for any person or agency to prioritize the critical habitat restoration of native plant species. **These habitat areas also provide a major benefit to local water quality by reducing erosion, trapping sediment and nutrients from entering our waterways, and cooling rainfall before it enters local creeks and streams.** Recent studies have shown that 54% of the lower 48 states have been developed and 41% of our land is in agricultural use, leaving only 5% of the country as undisturbed, “natural” areas. With thousands of species at risk of extinction within the next few decades due to habitat loss and fragmentation, Marylanders need to protect and restore as much land as possible for pollinator species through the use of native plants.

We support this bill as it increases native plants, habitat areas, and public outreach surrounding these issues, we and urge the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB178**.

Sincerely,

Zack Kelleher

Sassafras Riverkeeper, on behalf of ShoreRivers

ShoreRivers

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher Sassafras Riverkeeper

shorerivers.org | 443.385.0511 | info@shorerivers.org

SB0178 - SHA - Pollinator Habitat Plan_LOI_FINAL.p

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

January 31, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 178 – Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter of information for the Committee's consideration on Senate Bill 178.

Senate Bill 178 requires the State Highway Administration's (SHA) pollinator habitat plan to include policies and procedures 1) to encourage the use of pollinator-friendly native plants along State highways; 2) to develop and maintain pollinator habitat areas along State highways, to the extent feasible and in accordance with relevant safety standards for all road users; and 3) for educating and communicating with the public about pollinator habitat areas along State highways. In developing the policies and procedures, SHA must consider certain federal policies. SHA must regularly update the pollinator habitat plan by October 1, 2024. Finally, Senate Bill 178 requires the Administration to track and evaluate federal programs that provide funding for pollinator habitats, native plants, and invasive species control, and apply for any funding the Administration determines appropriate and beneficial to pollinator habitats; and requires the Administration to update the plan by October 1 each year; among other requirements.

In 2016, the General Assembly passed Chapter 614, which required SHA, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, to develop a pollinator habitat plan. SHA's current Pollinator Habitat Plan emphasizes three strategies to enhance pollinator habitat, food, shelter, and mobility networks, in an effort to support the various life stages of these important species while balancing mobility and safety needs: 1) construction of demonstration gardens (5 previously constructed gardens totaling approximately 0.3 acres, and 6 new sites – approximately 0.2 acres total - planned for construction this year); 2) establishment and management of roadside pollinator meadows, where appropriate (3 sites to be added this year, totaling approximately 6.7 acres); and 3) efforts to identify appropriate locations for the aforementioned strategies, as well as an inventory of existing sites. SHA publishes information about its current Pollinator Habitat Plan on its website, as well as information about its design best practices in the SHA Landscape Design Guidance document. Further, to foster educational opportunities on the importance of pollinator habitat preservation, SHA includes educational signage in its demonstration gardens that provide information on pollinators and identify the native host and food-source plants that make up pollinator habitat.

Presently, SHA is developing corridor vegetation management guidelines to maintain safety and operability that reflect best management practices outlined in the Federal Highway Administration's Roadside Best Management Practices that Benefit Pollinators, coordinating how this may be balanced with requests for maintenance within these corridors. Additionally, SHA has a team working on a plan to meet federal requirements based on the protection of the monarch butterfly and the need for pollinator areas. In response, SHA has included milkweed, the host plant for monarch butterfly larvae, in the plant schedules and meadow seed mixes for the projects to be constructed this year. Further, SHA notes that milkweed spreads naturally along the roadside when mowing schedules are appropriately managed; as such, late season mowing practices can help promote the natural spread of milkweed in the SHA right-of-way. Despite the focus on monarch butterflies, the Administration is developing this plan with the potential to add other pollinators in the future.

Finally, MDOT has dedicated teams that regularly research federal funding opportunities, including those that would apply to the efforts underlying the Pollinator Habitat Plan. The Administration recognizes the importance of leveraging discretionary funds to support the state's transportation and environmental priorities (e.g., solar panel installation, stormwater water quality management) and seeks to make every dollar count. However, given the limited pool of State matching funds, SHA must balance its many competing transportation and environmental priorities to ensure maximum value for the State and its citizens. As such, SHA suggests that the Committee allow the Administration to consider the reasonableness of pursuing the many policies and funding opportunities available to support a thriving pollinator population in Maryland, when crafting its Pollinator Habitat Plan.

The Maryland Department of Transportation looks forward to further collaboration with the sponsor and respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of Senate Bill 178.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Mickler
Division Chief, Legislative Services
State Highway Administration
410-545-5629

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090