



# FREDERICK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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March 29, 2024

Chair Joseline Pena-Melnyk  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Subject: Support for Maryland Senate Bill 0074 (2024) Designating Persimmon as the Official State Fruit**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Distinguished Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Maryland SB0074 (2024), which designates the Persimmon as the official state fruit of Maryland. As a native Maryland varietal, the Persimmon has played an integral role in our state's history, culture, and well-being.

From the Native Peoples who first inhabited this land to settlers, Enslaved individuals, and the diverse array of international immigrants who now call Maryland home, the Persimmon has nourished and sustained generations. Its presence is a testament to our shared and rich agricultural heritage.

With its sweet, complex flavor, Persimmons grace our tables in puddings, beverages, and baked goods. Across ethnic cuisines, from Asian to European, the Persimmon adds a delightful touch to dishes. Its versatility bridges cultures, connects us through food, and builds on Maryland's contributions to American cuisine.

Through this designation<sup>3</sup>. Building Food Connections: In our heavily agricultural state, many children have lost touch with the origins of their food. , the Persimmon provides an opportunity to reconnect us to the origins of our food especially our children. Imagine children gathering under Persimmon trees learning about seasons, flavors, and the joy of harvesting. Communal fruit picking fosters a sense of belonging, encourages physical activity, and promotes overall health.

It can also assist in addressing Maryland food deserts, where fresh, nutritious options are scarce. The Persimmon, with its rich nutritional content, can be a valuable resource. By planting Persimmon trees in community spaces, we empower residents to access wholesome food and improve their well-being. And as a native varietal, the Persimmon can contribute to environmental stewardship and reforestation efforts benefiting our ecosystem, and providing shade, habitat, and beauty.

The Persimmon's hues—ranging from deep orange to scarlet—perfectly complement Maryland's existing state symbols. Just as our flag, bird, steamed crab, butterfly, and Old Bay spice evoke pride, the Persimmon's colors resonate with our collective identity, and will

encourage Marylanders to embrace the outdoors. Whether in orchards, parks, or backyards, let us celebrate the Persimmon and rediscover the beauty of open spaces.

In Conclusion, I urge a favorable report. Let the Persimmon symbolize our commitment to nature, health, and unity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. O'Connor", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Michael O'Connor  
Mayor, The City of Frederick