

Maryland General Assembly
House of Delegates
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Support for Maryland Senate Bill 74 (2024) Designating American Persimmon as the Official State Fruit

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

I am writing to wholeheartedly express my enthusiastic support for Maryland Senate Bill 74 (2024), which designates the American **Persimmon** as the official state fruit of Maryland. Beyond its delicious flavor and vibrant color, the American Persimmon, a native Maryland varietal, embodies the essence of our state's rich agricultural heritage, cultural identity, and community spirit.

1. Economic Benefits and Domestic Market:

- The Persimmon, though lesser known, has immense potential in our domestic market. While Asian persimmons have gained popularity, the American persimmon remains a hidden gem.
- By designating it as our state fruit, we can stimulate local demand, encourage cultivation, and create economic opportunities for farmers and small-scale producers.
- Imagine the ripple effect: Persimmon orchards flourishing, local business thriving, and consumers savoring the unique fruit.

2. Community Building and Festivals:

- The Persimmon is not just some fruit; it's a catalyst for community engagement. Picture families gathering under Persimmon-laden branches during harvest season.
- Let's celebrate with **Persimmon Festivals** -parades, food stalls, and cultural events. These gatherings foster unity, pride, and a sense of place.
- Children learning about seasons, flavors, and the joy of harvesting – these experiences strengthen our bonds and build resilient communities.

3. Symbol of Resilience and Beauty:

- The Persimmon's journey from green to yellow to deep orange mirrors our own resilience. It withstands frosts, matures, and sweetens.
- Just as the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly emerges from its cocoon, the Persimmon transforms, symbolizing growth, hope, and renewal.
- Let our state fruit inspire us to embrace change, adapt, and find beauty even in challenging times.

While some may consider the Pawpaw as a contender for an official Maryland state fruit, it is important to note that it is already recognized as the state fruit of Ohio and Missouri, and efforts have been made in Virginia to designate it as their state fruit. The American Persimmon, on the other hand, stands unclaimed, unique to Maryland, reflecting our distinct cultural and natural landscape.

In conclusion, I urge you to support Senate Bill 74 with unwavering enthusiasm and give it a favorable report. Let the American Persimmon symbolize our commitment to nature, health, and unity. Together, we can cultivate a stronger, more vibrant Maryland—one where the American Persimmon thrives alongside our shared dreams.

Wholeheartedly,

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