

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

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

I am writing in support of Maryland Senate Bill 74 (2024). This bill designates the American Persimmon as the official state fruit of Maryland. A state fruit like no other, this bill can cause economic benefits within Maryland's domestic market, strengthen community building with American Persimmon festivals, and will help distinguish Maryland's resilience and beauty. The American Persimmon is a delicious fruit that embodies Maryland's agricultural heritage.

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.

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. During the fall, we can celebrate with Persimmon Festivals -parades, food stalls, and cultural events. These gatherings would 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.

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 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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