



Annapolis  
Chesapeake Beach  
Highland Beach  
Indian Head  
La Plata  
Leonardtwn  
North Beach  
Port Tobacco

**Southern Maryland Municipal Association (SMMA)**  
*Office of the President*

*March 29, 2024*

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

**Subject: Support for SB 74 – Designating the American Persimmon as Maryland’s State Fruit**

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

I write to you today on behalf of the Southern Maryland Municipal Association (SMMA), representing the vibrant communities of Annapolis, Chesapeake Beach, Highland Beach, Indian Head, La Plata, Leonardtown, North Beach, and Port Tobacco. Our collective mission is to foster growth, unity, and prosperity within our region.

**1. Economic Benefits and Domestic Market:** The **Persimmon**, though lesser known, holds 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 businesses thriving, and consumers savoring this unique fruit.

**2. Community Building and Festivals:** The Persimmon is not merely a fruit; it serves as a catalyst for community engagement. Picture families gathering under Persimmon-laden branches during harvest season, sharing stories and laughter. Let us 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 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 our communities adapt and thrive. Like the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly emerging from its cocoon, the Persimmon symbolizes 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.

I kindly request your favorable report on SB 74, recognizing the American Persimmon as Maryland’s state fruit. Together, we can cultivate a fruitful future for our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*Patrick J. Mahoney*

President, Southern Maryland Municipal Association