

Council Bill 26-25 – Vegetation-Invasive Plants – Native Plant Protection Act

Position: Favorable with Amendment

Testimony of Deborah Cohn

Date: July 13, 2025

I have lived in Montgomery County for nearly 40 years. I support legislation designed to increase the amount of native species in landscaping in the county and to limit the sale and use of invasive plants. I understand the desire to remove poison ivy within county subdivisions even though poison ivy is a native plant. English ivy, however, is an invasive species because it is native to Europe and western Asia (and hence is not a native species) and can cause economic harm due to its potential to outcompete native vegetation, cause structural damage to buildings and weaken and kill trees. Accordingly, I recommend that Bill 26-25 be amended to prohibit future sale of English ivy by amending Article 2 as follows:

60 Article 2. Invasive bamboo and English ivy.

61 58-8. Definitions.

62 As used in this Article the following terms have the stated meaning:

63 Invasive bamboo means a woody grass commonly referred to as bamboo that is

64 characterized by spreading behavior and is not native to the Mid-Atlantic

65 Region, including bamboo species in the genus *Phyllostachys*.

65A Invasive ivy means an evergreen perennial vine commonly referred to as English ivy that is

65B characterized by horizontal and vertical spreading behavior and is not native to the Mid-Atlantic

65C Region, scientifically known *Hedera helix*.

66 Mid-Atlantic Region means Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, New

67 York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, West Virginia, and the District of

68 Columbia.

69 Property owner means any person or entity:

70 (a) holding title to property; or

71 (b) any lessee, tenant, or occupant having care, custody, control, or

72 management of any property.

73 58-9. Regulation of invasive bamboo and English ivy.

74 A person or entity in the County must not sell or offer for sale:

74A     invasive bamboo, and

74B     English ivy.

75 58-10. Reporting, inspection, and notices of violation.

76 (a) Complaints about the sale of invasive bamboo and English ivy may be reported to the

77 Director.

78 (b) The Director may conduct any necessary inspections and issue a Class B 79 violation notice to the property owner.

I encourage the County to continue removing English ivy on certain county owned land and on county owned buildings, including schools. I also encourage the County to continue informing residents and landowners of the economic risks of including English ivy on their properties. I do not, however, advocate that this legislation be modified to require removal of English ivy on private property within subdivisions.