



One Montgomery Green Testimony

22 July 2025

RE: Bill 26-25, Vegetation – Invasive Plants, and

Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 25-10

One Montgomery Green appreciates Councilmember Glass's leadership and is pleased to see the County Council take up important issues related to native plants and their archenemies, non-native invasive plants (NNI). We support both the above bill and the ZTA, but with amendments. I am Leah Haygood, Chair of the Board of One Montgomery Green (OMG). I have had a 40-year career in the environmental and sustainability fields. I've participated in a number of Weed Warrior events and I'm a native plant gardener who has benefitted from the County's Rainscapes programs. OMG holds many events throughout the year, including youth education programs, cleanups and reimagining the Wheaton Streeter. In all of these, we promote native plant use and educate citizens about NNIs and we find a great deal of interest about those topics.

Bill 26-25

Exempt native plants from weed removal requirements: This is an important step in supporting and promoting the use of native plants. Relevant also to the ZTA, the definition of native plants is crucial and should be coordinated with definitions of the federal and state government and non-governmental organizations. In general, native plant lists should be based on an ecosystem approach rather than state boundaries and should include appropriate cultivars. It will also be important to couple this, and all the other measures in this bill and ZTA, with information, outreach and training for those who will enforce the law.

Sale of bamboo: Banning the sale of bamboo that spreads by runners is a great idea because the plant has invaded public lands in many places and is extremely hard to remove. However, the same could be said for many other non-native invasive plants. It is best to think of these plants as pollution – diabolical biological pollution. For example, everyone would agree that dumping trash in the park is pollution. What if that trash then multiplied itself and took over the park? It's a weird image, but it is happening in many public and private spaces. Ideally, the sale of all NNIs should be banned. In doing research for this testimony it seems like there was legislation passed at the state level that would move in that direction but I don't believe the comprehensive state list of NNIs is available yet. Again, coordination with other bodies and lists will be essential to prevent confusion. Lists of NNIs, in particular, evolve as new threats emerge and scientific understanding advances so an authoritative but periodically updated list should be used.

ZTA 25-10

50% Native Plants Species in Open Space Landscaping and in General Landscaping plant materials.

As in the above bill, requiring the use of native species and prohibiting NNIs are great ideas and step forward. However, we believe that more thought and consultation needs to be put into how to measure the 50%. Currently the number of species is the basis for the calculation. That would seem to invite gamesmanship and

possibly unintended results. A developer could plant only two species, with one having many individuals covering almost all the property as long as a single native plant was used. It would seem to make sense to use both the number of species and the coverage of the mature plants to ensure biodiversity and ecological benefits. The methodology for that calculation exists and further workshopping of a method would be useful.

And again, information, outreach, coordination and enforcement will be needed to take these great ideas from the page to the landscape.