



TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment & Energy

FROM: Aimee Isaac, CIB Board Appointee of the Senate *Pro tem*

SUBJECT: SB 22, ACT TO AMEND TITLE 3 RELATING TO INVASIVE PLANTS

DATE: January 18, 2021

The Center for the Inland Bays is a private non-profit created by the General Assembly to oversee the wise use and enhancement of Delaware's Inland Bays. SB 22 supports an important objective of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Inland Bays and their watershed and the implementation of Delaware's Wildlife Habitat Action Plan. We support this very important bill and thank the sponsors greatly for their work.

Invasive species are increasing in their impacts through the spread of established invasives and introductions and establishment of newly invasive species. Nationwide, invasive species are estimated to cost \$160 billion in damages and losses<sup>1</sup>, and are increasingly costly to control. The Center speaks from the experience of managing the 150-acre James Farm Ecological Preserve near Ocean View. Control of a half dozen established invasive plants referenced by this bill is of our largest tasks at the Preserve.

By and large, the species on this list are already established and spreading in Delaware. Prohibiting their sale will help only slightly to slow their damage. Of much greater importance, is the identification and prohibition for sale of those species that may become newly established invaders. Case in point for our Preserve is Fountain grass, an ornamental that we identified for the first time this year establishing in our meadow and woods.

There is a well documented lag time between when alien plants escape cultivation and begin to spread to the point we notice their invasiveness in the environment<sup>2</sup>. At the point that we notice this, it is often too late to stop their spread. Essential to prevent newly established invasives is a regular and precautionous approach to examining and listing invaders. While regulations resulting from this bill can help address this, we request the bill itself provide more assurance in regards through amendment to require annual updates of the Invasive List and Potentially Invasive Watch List as follows:

*Line 28. (1) The Secretary shall maintain and annually update the Invasive Plant List...*

*Line 70. (1) The Secretary shall maintain and annually update the watch list...*

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<sup>1</sup> Pimentel et al. Ecological Economics 52 (2005) 273 – 288 (costs adjusted to 2020 dollars)

<sup>2</sup> Hobbs and Humphries. Conservation Biology, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Aug., 1995), pp. 761-770