

April 19, 2024

Chairman Creech, Ranking Member Brent, Vice Chair Klopfenstein and distinguished members of the Agriculture Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you regarding HB 364 and its beneficial impact to organizations that pursue the preservation of native plant habitats through propagation and seed exchanges with their members and the general public. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend your Committee's hearing in person so I am submitting my testimony in writing.

I am Christine Maticic, a Master Gardener of thirteen years from Liberty Township, Butler County, Ohio. I chair our Scholarship Committee and work on education with the public through our booth at the Butler County Fair and other venues. Master Gardener is a program of volunteers through the Ohio State Extension Offices.

Prior to my retirement in 2022, I was a Liberty Township Trustee for 20 years; past president of OKI Regional Council of Governments and board member for 22 years; Chair of CLOUT (Coalition of Ohio Urban Townships – part of the Ohio Township Association) and Executive Committee representative for 12 years; and testified and worked with legislators on numerous bills and common-sense approaches to legislative issues.

As I mentioned, HB 364 will exempt our organization as a noncommercial seed sharing activity from the laws governing seed labeling, permitting, inspection, advertising, and sales reporting. This would enable the Butler County Master Gardeners to provide seeds, free of charge, to our members and the general public. This would be done by our members through our normal meetings, educational sessions, and projects in the Butler County area we organize and volunteer at.

In addition to the benefits to our organization, it will update the noxious weed list to remove beneficial plants such as milkweed and ironweed. These plants are vitally important to not only the survival of the monarch butterfly, but other wildlife.

Chairman Creech, Ranking Member Brent, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, and members of the House Agriculture Committee, I ask for your support in passing this legislation out of committee to the House floor for consideration and a vote. This is crucial to the sustainment of native plants, and wildlife and the ability of noncommercial non-profit organizations to volunteer to share these seeds with the general public, free of charge.

Thank you again for your time. I look forward to working with you to ensure we have responsible, practical legislation in place.

Sincerely,  
Christine Maticic  
Butler County Master Gardener  
and retired Liberty Township Trustee  
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