

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
COMMITTEE REPORT**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

DRAFT

TO: All Councilmembers

FROM: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Committee of the Whole

DATE: September 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Report on Bill 23-302, the “Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020”

The Committee of the Whole, to which Bill 23-302, the “Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020” was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Council.

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I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

On May 17, 2019, the “Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020,”¹ was introduced by Councilmember Charles Allen to designate the Little Brown Bat as the official mammal of the District of Columbia. As amended in the committee print, the purpose is to designate the Big Brown Bat as the official flying mammal of the District of Columbia.

47 other states have an official mammal or type of mammal² and three other states have an official flying mammal.³ Currently, the District of Columbia has neither official rock, gem, nor

¹ Originally introduced as the “Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019.”

² State Mammals, StateSymbolsUSA.org (Sept. 16, 2020), <https://statesymbolsusa.org/categories/mammal>. Alternatively, see each state’s website.

³ Official State Flying Mammals, NetState.com (Sept. 16, 2020), https://www.netstate.com/states/tables/state_mammals_flying.htm. The Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) is the State flying mammal of Oklahoma and Texas and the Virginia Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*) is Virginia's state bat.

mineral. The designation of an official rock will bring the District in line with the majority of states. The District does have an official fruit (the cherry)⁴ and dinosaur (the Capitalsaurus).⁵

The Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) is a species of mouse-eared bat found throughout the United States, including the District of Columbia. Bats are the only flying mammals. The Big Brown Bat can fly up to 40 miles per hour, one of the fastest bats. It is considered large for an American bat and has a wingspan of 12-16 inches and a weight of 14-21 grams. A Big Brown Bat can live up to 18-20 years in the wild. It uses echolocation to forage for insects, preferring to eat beetles using their jaws to chew threw the hard exoskeleton, but also eating a variety of other insects including moths, flies, wasps, and flying ants that they capture in flight.

Big Brown Bat



Source: Chesapeake Bay Program⁶

Bill 23-302 began as a research project conducted by a group of Girl Scouts from Troops 44046, 44047, and 44051 (“the Scouts”). The Scouts studied bats in great detail, and took action to protect bats by, for example, planting bat gardens at 2 Ward 6 elementary schools.⁷ The Scouts identified the Little Brown bat, one of 8 species of bats that the District Department of Energy and Environment (“DOEE”) identified as living in the District as of July 2018, to draw attention to the impact of White-nose syndrome, because the Little Brown bat had been especially hard hit by this disease, which has no known cure.⁸ However, after the bill was introduced, DOEE noted that the Little Brown bat, which had once been the most common bat in the District, has not been seen in the District for several years.⁹ DOEE pointed out that the Big Brown bat, which is now the most

⁴ D.C. Law 12-155

⁵ D.C. Law 12-155

⁶ Photo Credit Don Pfitzer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

⁷ Council of the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole, *Public Hearing on Bill 23-302, the “Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019”* (testimony of Josephine Stivers, Girl Scout Troop # 44047, Public Witness).

⁸ *Id.* (testimony of Delia Braford and Emma Voyles, Girl Scout Troop # 44047, Public Witnesses).

⁹ *Id.* (testimony of Lydia Tiersky, Girl Scout Troop # 44501, Public Witness).

common bat in the District, has developed a resistance to the fungus that causes White-nose syndrome.¹⁰ The Scouts encouraged the Council to amend the bill as introduced to recognize the Big Brown bat instead,¹¹ and the Committee agrees with this assessment.

The Committee agrees that it is important to draw attention to bats and their population loss caused by White-nose syndrome, in particular because bats reproduce slowly.¹² At the hearing, witnesses noted that bats are vital to ecosystems around the world,¹³ bats are often misunderstood.¹⁴ Additionally, bats help control damaging insects, saving the agricultural industry an estimated \$3.7 billion per year, including by eating up to 1,200 insects, mosquitoes included, in an hour.¹⁵

Due to importance of bats to our ecosystem, in order to highlight the need to prevent White-nose syndrome from further reducing the number of bats in the District, and to counter misconceptions about bats, it is appropriate to recognize the Bat Brown bat as the official state flying mammal of the District of Columbia. The Committee recommends approval of Bill 23-302, now known as the “Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020.”

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

May 17, 2019	Bill 23-302, the “Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2020” is introduced by Councilmember Allen.
May 28, 2019	Bill 23-302 is officially read at the regularly scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting and referred to the Committee of the Whole.
May 31, 2019	Notice of Intent to Act on Bill 23-302 is published in the <i>DC Register</i> .
December 27, 2019	Notice of a Public Hearing on Bill 23-302 is published in the <i>DC Register</i> .
January 27, 2020	A Public Hearing is held on Bill 23-302 by the Committee of the Whole.
September 22, 2020	The Committee of the Whole marks up Bill 23-302.

III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Lindsay Rohrbaugh, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Department of Energy and Environment, testified on behalf of the Executive in support of Bill 23-302. Her testimony is summarized below.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* (testimony of Ava Orfield-Shah, Girl Scout Troop # 44051, Public Witness).

¹² *Id.* (testimony of Lydia Adcock, Girl Scout Troop # 44051, Public Witness).

¹³ *Id.* (testimony of Mary O’Brien, Girl Scout Troop # 44051, Public Witness).

¹⁴ *Id.* (testimony of Kajsa Guhr, Girl Scout Troop # 44051, Public Witness).

¹⁵ *Id.* (testimony of Mary O’Brien, Girl Scout Troop # 44051, Public Witness).

IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission on Bill 23-302.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a Public Hearing on Bill 23-302, the Big Brown Bat Official Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020 on January 27, 2020. The testimony summarized below is from that hearing. A copy of the testimony is attached to this report.

Alison Kaufman, Troop Leader, Girl Scout Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and explained the background on how the Scouts arrived at their suggestion for the legislation.

Lydia Adcock, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and explained why bats are cool and that there are many different varieties of bats.

Mary O'Brien, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and explained that bats are good for the environment and are an effective pest control method.

Kajsa Guhr, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and stated that bats are widely misunderstood and that they are genetically closer to humans than rodents.

Holly Bradford, Troop Leader, Troop #44047, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and discussed the Scouts' bat walks and education on bats.

Delia Bradford, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44047, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and explained that bats are in trouble due to environmental factors and diseases like white nose syndrome which have caused the disappearance of the Little Brown Bat which has not been seen in the District since 2006.

Emma Voyles, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44047, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and stated that it is expected that Little Brown Bats may be down to one percent of its pre-white nose syndrome population by 2030.

Josephine Stivers, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44047, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and discussed the importance of bat gardens and the dangers of light pollution to bats.

Jessica Pannett, Troop Leader, Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and explained why the Scouts changed their recommendation for the Big Brown Bat to be the state mammal.

Ava Pannett, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and described the characteristics of the Big Brown Bat.

Ava Orfield-Shah, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44051, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and spoke to the Big Brown Bats diet, size, and flight speed.

Josephine Stivers, Junior Girl Scout, Troop #44047, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and described the process by which the Scouts originally chose to recommend the Little Brown Bat but changed that recommendation state bat to the Big Brown Bat.

Connor Marshall, Board Member, Friends of Kingman and Heritage Islands, testified in support of Bill 23-302 and discussed the bat's local habitat which includes Kingman Park and Heritage islands adjacent to the Anacostia River.

Lindsay Rohrbaugh, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Department of Energy and Environment, testified that the Executive supports to Bill 23-302 and that an official symbol will be another tool for the Department to use to engage and educate District residents.

Eli Cort-Stone, LAMB School 3rd Grade Student, submitted written testimony in support of Bill 23-302.

There was no testimony or written comments in opposition to Bill 23-302.

VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Bill 23-302 has no impact on existing law. Bill 23-302, the "Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020," designates the Big Brown Bat as the official flying mammal of the District of Columbia.

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

Funds are sufficient in the FY 2020 through FY 2024 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill has no fiscal impact on the District's budget and financial plan.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

<u>Section 1</u>	States the short title of the Bill 23-302.
<u>Section 2</u>	Describes the Big Brown Bat. Designates the Big Brown Bat as the official flying mammal of the District of Columbia.
<u>Section 3</u>	Adopts Fiscal Impact Statement.
<u>Section 4</u>	Establishes the effective date by stating the standard 30-day congressional review language.

IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. Bill 23-302 as introduced.
2. Written testimony and comments.
3. Fiscal Impact Statement.
4. Legal Sufficiency Review.
5. Committee Print for Bill 23-302.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004

Memorandum

To : Members of the Council

From : 
Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

Date : May 28, 2019

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Friday, May 17, 2019. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019", B23-0302

INTRODUCED BY: Councilmember Allen

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services



Councilmember Charles Allen

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To designate the Little Brown Bat as the official state mammal of the District of Columbia.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

That this act may be cited as the “Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019”.

Sec. 2. Official mammal of the District of Columbia.

(a) The Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is a species of mouse-eared bat found throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including on Kingman Island.

(b) Bats are the only flying mammals. The Little Brown Bat can fly up to 22 miles per hour. True to its name, it is small, with a wingspan of 8-11 inches and a weight of no more than 14 grams—the same as 14 small paper clips.

(c) The Little Brown Bat uses echolocation to forage for flying insects such as mosquitoes, flies, beetles, and moths along the edges of wetlands, including the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. It may consume up to 1,200 of these insects in a single night.

(d) The Little Brown Bat forms large summer maternity colonies, called roosts,

33 containing hundreds or even thousands of bats. They can roost in a variety of man-made
34 and natural structures, such as in hollow trees, under bridges, behind shutters, in
35 buildings, and in bat houses. Little Brown Bats hibernate in caves during the winter
36 months, which makes them especially susceptible to a fungal disease called White-Nose
37 Syndrome.

38 (e) The Little Brown Bat was once the most commonly found bat in North
39 America, but its population has been decimated by White-Nose Syndrome. In 2018, the
40 International Union for Conservation of Nature identified the Little Brown Bat as an
41 endangered species, after White-Nose Syndrome caused a loss of 90% of the population
42 in the northeastern United States.

43 (f) Little Brown Bats are long-lived—some have been documented to live up to
44 34 years—but each female bat produces only one pup a year. Hence Little Brown Bat
45 populations may take a long time to rebound, even if a cure for White-Nose Syndrome is
46 found.

47 (g) The Little Brown Bat has good friends in the Girl Scouts of the Capitol Hill
48 Cluster School, troops 44046, 44047, and 44051, who studied Little Brown Bats and
49 proposed that the Council adopt the bats as the official state mammal of the District of
50 Columbia.

51 (h) The Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is hereby designated the official
52 state mammal of the District of Columbia.

53 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

54 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the
55 fiscal impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act

56 of 1975, approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

57 Sec. 4. Effective date.

58 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto
59 by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of
60 congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home
61 Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-
62 206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
B23-302, Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019

Testimony of Alison Kaufman, Troop Leader for Girl Scout troop # 44051:

My name is **Alison Kaufman**, and I am a Troop Leader for Girl Scout Troop # 44051, which is part of the Girl Scout Council for the Nation's Capital. On behalf of all three of our Girl Scout troops, #44046, #44047, and #44051, I would like to extend warm thanks to all of the Councilmembers for providing the opportunity to participate in this public hearing today. We especially want to thank Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, who met with our troops last year, and listened so patiently as our Girl Scouts presented their idea for this legislation, as well as giving them an important introduction to how local government works. I am here, along with other members of our troops, to speak on behalf of the proposed legislation to designate a bat as the state mammal of DC.

The troop I co-lead includes girls in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades from the Capitol Hill Cluster School, Basis DC, and Washington Latin Public Charter School. Our other two troops are #44046, which includes Kindergarten and first grade girls, and #44047, which includes second and third grade girls, mostly from the Capitol Hill Cluster School and a few other schools in our neighborhood of Capitol Hill. Our troops were created in 2017 to help build community among our three schools of the Capitol Hill Cluster School, and over the past few years we have created an amazing sisterhood among our girls.

One way that we build community across the troops is to develop a shared project or theme that allows girls of all ages to participate at the appropriate level. Holly Braford, one of our troop leaders who will also be testifying today, suggested tackling an important but often misunderstood and maligned topic: bats!

Studying bats gave us a chance to spend time outdoors, at Kingman Island, Congressional Cemetery, and other DC parks, learning about our urban ecosystems and the animals that inhabit them—including the many types of bats that live right in our own city.

To learn more, we spoke with experts at the DC Department of Energy and Environment, the US Department of the Interior, and the Save Lucy [the Bat] Campaign which is based in Mount Solon, Virginia. Over the course of the year, our Girl Scouts discovered how important bats are

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to our ecosystem, and we learned that White-Nose Syndrome is decimating many of the bat populations in DC and across North America.

Once our girl scouts learned about bats, they wanted to know what we could do to help them. You will hear today about some of the efforts that they made over the past year—including planting bat gardens, building bat houses, reducing light pollution, and educating others about bats. The legislation that we are discussing today came directly out of that desire to spread the knowledge that the troops gained to a broader audience, by naming a bat as DC's state mammal and encouraging others to learn about these fascinating and important animals.

Sitting with me on this panel are three Junior girl scouts from troop 44051, who will tell you all about bats in general, and why we should protect them. They will tell you why bats are cool. Bats are important. And bats are misunderstood.

Thank you for listening.

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
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Testimony of Lydia Adcock, Girl Scout Troop # 44051:

My name is **Lydia Adcock**, of Girl Scout troop #44051, and I'm here to tell you that bats are cool!

There are lots of ways that bats are different from other mammals. First of all, they are the **only** mammals capable of true and sustained flight. They're not related to birds.

They are the second largest group of mammals in the world, and they are ancient: bats have lived on Earth for at least 52 million years.

Bats are also one of the longest-lived mammals for their size. Some bats can live for more than 40 years!

Bats live in all kinds of habitats and are all kinds of sizes, from the tiny bumblebee bat that weighs less than a penny, to the golden-crowned flying fox, which weighs 2.6 pounds and has a wingspan up to five and a half feet long. In our area, there are two main types of bats: tree roosting bats that migrate in the winter, and non-migrating bats that spend their winters hibernating in caves and mines.

One of the coolest things about bats is how they find their food: since they're nocturnal (meaning they sleep during the day and hunt at night), they don't *look* for their food, they *listen* for it. They use **echolocation**, which means they send out a sound and wait for it to bounce off something tasty. Their echolocation is so precise that they can detect a minnow's fin, as fine as a human hair, sticking up only two millimeters above a pond's surface.

However, bats are especially vulnerable to extinction, because they reproduce slowly. Most bat species only give birth to one pup at a time, sometimes just once a year. Mother bats give birth while hanging upside down! A mother bat may fly with a pup under its wing, clinging to its mother's waist with its toes. The largest bat roost in the world is actually a maternity ward, found near San Antonio, Texas.

When we think about having a state mammal, it makes a lot of sense to consider a bat! Bats are definitely one of the coolest mammals in the world.

Thank you for listening.

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
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Testimony of Mary O'Brien, Girl Scout Troop # 44051:

My name is **Mary O'Brien**, of Girl Scout troop #44051, and I'm here to tell you that bats are important!

Over 1,390 species of bats around the world are playing roles that are vital to natural ecosystems and human economies.

Bats control pests. Many bat species eat insects that harm humans and agriculture. In the United States, scientists estimate that bats are worth more than \$3.7 billion dollars a year in reduced crop damage and pesticide use. Bats enjoy eating moths, mosquitoes, rootworms, beetles, and flies, and they can eat up to 1,200 insects an hour! Imagine how much worse DC summers would be if we didn't have any bats to eat our mosquitoes!

Bats are pollinators. From deserts to rainforests, nectar-feeding bats are critical for pollination. A few important plants that depend on bat pollinators include: bananas, peaches, guava, eucalyptus, and agave. Bats are considered "keystone species" that are essential to some tropical and desert ecosystems. For example, the great baobab tree of the East African savannah is so critical to the survival of so many species that it is known as the "African Tree of Life." It depends almost exclusively on bats for pollination. Without bats, the Tree of Life could disappear, and with it, one of our planet's richest ecosystems.

Bats are seed dispersers. Millions of acres of rainforest are cleared every year for logging, agriculture, ranching, and other uses. Fruit-eating bats restore those vital forests. Bats are so effective at dispersing seeds that they've been called the "farmers of the tropics." Bats cover much larger distances than birds, and because they fly at night, when fewer predators are hunting, they are more willing to fly across cleared land. So they scatter far more seeds in their droppings across cleared areas than birds do. Bat droppings, known as guano, are also one of nature's best fertilizers.

Bats are definitely one of the most important mammals to many ecosystems and human economies in the world.

Thank you for listening.

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Testimony of Kajsa Guhr, Girl Scout Troop # 44051:

My name is **Kajsa Guhr**, of Girl Scout troop #44051, and I'm here to tell you that bats are misunderstood!

Bats have gotten a bad rap, which makes it harder to spread the word about how important they are. There are tons of false myths about bats. For example:

Bats are not flying mice! In fact, bats are more closely related to humans than they are to rats and mice.

Bats will not suck your blood! While there are three vampire bat species in Latin America that feed on blood, only one targets mammals, and it's usually cattle.

Many people think that bats are dirty and all bats carry rabies. This is not true at all. Bats groom themselves often, and keep themselves very clean. Less than half of 1% of bats carry rabies. You cannot get rabies from simply being in the same room as a bat.

Some people are afraid of bats because they think bats try to bite people. Bats only use their teeth if they are eating, or feel threatened. Like with most animals, if you leave them alone, they won't hurt you. We need to teach everyone to stay away from wild animals, including bats, and call animal rescue organizations if you find a sick or injured wild animal.

Bat droppings are not poisonous. Guano is actually a great natural fertilizer. Both bird and bat droppings can carry a virus that is dangerous to humans if they breathe it in. But this can be prevented by wearing a face respirator when appropriate.

Bats won't get tangled in your hair! The expression "blind as a bat" is false! Bats see as well as any other mammal, even though they use echolocation to find their food in the dark. They can see you just fine and they're not interested in your hair!

It is not okay to kill bats that get into buildings. If a bat gets into a building, shut the door to the room and open a window. Don't try to hit the bat or grab it. Call an animal rescue organization to help remove it safely.

Bats are definitely deeply misunderstood.

Thank you for listening.

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Testimony of Holly Braford, Troop Leader for Girl Scout Troop #44047:

My name is **Holly Braford**, and I am a Troop Leader for Girl Scout Troop # 44047. I am also here, along with other members of our troops, to speak on behalf of the proposed legislation to designate a bat as the state mammal of DC.

I first became aware of the importance of bats and the devastating effects of White Nose Syndrome when I visited the New York Hall of Science with my daughter. I proposed the idea of focusing our 2018-19 scouting year around bats with the leaders from our other troops, and everyone was excited about it.

Our three troops held our October meeting in 2018 at Kingman Island, where we met with Deborah Hammer from the Save Lucy Campaign. She spoke with the girls about bats, and then led the girls and our families on a bat walk, using an EchoMeter Bat Detector attached to her smart phone. During our bat walk, she detected five different species of bats, including a Big Brown bat, and a Mexican Free-tailed bat.

Once our Girl Scouts learned about bats, and watched them as they foraged so close to our neighborhood, they wanted to know what we could do to help them. The experts at the Save Lucy Campaign made some suggestions, like: plant bat gardens, reduce light pollution, and educate others about bats.

Sitting with me are three Brownie girls scouts from troop # 44047, who will tell you all about White-Nose Syndrome and the actions our troops have taken to help bats. Bats are in trouble. Our local bats face many challenges. We can help.

Thank you for listening.

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Testimony of Delia Braford, Girl Scout Troop # 44047:

My name is **Delia Braford**, of Girl Scout troop # 44047, and I'm here to tell you that bats are in trouble!

Bats that hibernate in caves are dying from White-nose syndrome, which is considered one of the worst wildlife diseases in modern times. White-nose syndrome has killed millions of bats across North America.

White-nose syndrome is a disease that affects hibernating bats and it caused by a fungus called *P. destructans*, or "*Pd*" for short. Sometimes *Pd* looks like a white fuzz on bats' faces, which is how the disease got its name. *Pd* thrives in cold, dark, moist places. It grows on the bare skin of bats while they're hibernating, causing them to become more active than usual and use up the fat stores they need to survive the winter. Bats with white-nose syndrome behave strangely, like flying outside during the daytime in winter.

Biologists have determined that white-nose syndrome has been in North America at least since 2006. It was first seen in caves in Upstate New York. Since then, white-nose syndrome has spread across North America, killing millions of bats. At some sites, 90 to 100 percent of bats have died. It is thought that the disease was first transmitted to North America on cavers' clothing, however, bat-to-bat transmission is the likely cause of the rapid spread of the disease.

At least seven bat species have been affected by white-nose syndrome, with the hardest hit being the Northern Long-eared bat, the Little Brown bat, and the Tri-colored bat.

There is no cure for white-nose syndrome, but scientists from all over the world are working together to study the disease, how it spreads and infects bats, and determine what we can do to control it.

In addition to white-nose syndrome, the loss of habitat, light pollution, and the growth of wind energy is also taking a huge toll on bats.

Thank you for listening.

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Testimony of Emma Voyles, Girl Scout Troop # 44047:

My name is **Emma Voyles**, of Girl Scout troop # 44047, and I'm here to tell you that our local bats face many challenges.

The DC region's bats have included the Big Brown bat, Little Brown bat, Tri-colored bat, Northern Long-eared bat, Eastern Red bat, Hoary bat, Silver-haired bat, and the Evening bat.

The Little Brown bat was one of the most commonly found bat species in the Chesapeake Bay watershed until very recently. However, white-nose syndrome (or WNS, for short) has decimated their populations across North America. In fact, biologists have not found any Little Brown bats in our area for several years. Scientists predict that the Little Brown bat will be reduced to just 1% of its pre-WNS population numbers by 2030.

Loss of habitat is another reason that bat populations are dwindling in our area. As the population of the DC region surges, bats' natural forest habitats are degraded or reduced. Bats seek alternative shelters, often inside buildings and houses.

Climate change is altering bats' habitats as well. The Mexican Free-tailed bat shouldn't be found this far north, but scientists have noticed their population in our region has been growing over the past five years. The problem is that they are not adapted to our winters, so they're often found with frostbite and other cold-weather-related ailments.

Light pollution from big cities, like DC, also makes it difficult for bats to thrive. Artificial lights disorient the bats, and can interfere with their reproduction cycles. Cities that have more trees are better suited for bats.

Our local bats definitely face many challenges.

Thank you for listening.

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Testimony of Josephine Stivers, Girl Scout Troop # 44047:

My name is **Josephine Stivers**, of Girl Scout troop # 44047, and I'm here to tell you how we can help bats.

As our troops studied bats and white-nose syndrome, we learned about the different ways that we can help bats. Using resources and contacts from the Save Lucy Campaign, the United States Department of the Interior, and DC's Department of Energy and Environment, our troops took specific actions to help bats in our neighborhood.

One way we learned we can help bats is by switching all outdoor lights to motion sensor lights, turning off all indoor lights at night, and planting more trees. Scientists have studied light pollution in other major cities, and have discovered that bats can thrive in cities with light pollution as long as there are plenty of trees.

We can also plant bat gardens, which include flowers that bloom at night, or stay open at night. These plants attract insects like moths, which bats love. Our troops used our troop funds to plant bat gardens at two of our schools last spring: Peabody Elementary School and Watkins Elementary School. Our gardens include Salvia, Creeping phlox, Penstemon, and Moon flowers.

Our troops also used our cookie proceeds to purchase bat house kits recommended by Bat Conservation International. Each troop built and painted two bat houses, and we installed them at Peabody, Watkins, and Congressional Cemetery.

We also used our troop funds to purchase an EchoMeter Bat Detector so that we can take bat walks as a troop and volunteer as citizen scientists.

Finally, our three troops made a donation to the Save Lucy Campaign, which is an organization that rescues local bats, and works to educate the community about bats and white-nose syndrome.

We can help bats, but we need to do more!

Thank you for listening.

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B23-302, Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019

Testimony of Jessica Pannett, Troop Organizer for Girl Scout troops # 44046, # 44047, # 44051:

My name is **Jessica Pannett**, and I am the Troop Organizer for our three Girl Scout troops: # 44046, # 44047, and # 44051. Before I explain how our troops arrived at this point today, I would like to thank each and every one of our amazing troop leaders from the 2018-19 scouting year, for all of their hard work and dedication to our bat projects. Thank you to Ramsey Alwin, Alison Black, Holly Braford, Coreil Dickinson, Tomeka Gueory, Kelly Guhr, Alison Kaufman, Lindsay Miller, and April Slayton. Every single one of them was instrumental in executing all of our bat work, from leading the studies about bats, and connecting us to the Association in charge of Congressional Cemetery; to arranging a visit for our troops to the US Department of the Interior, and keeping all of our bat-related projects on track. These leaders are true role models for our girls.

We also thank the parents and families of our Girl Scouts, who volunteered to help plant bat gardens, and build and install bat houses, and showed up to help whenever we asked for volunteers. In addition, many staff members, teachers, and Master Gardeners at our school were excited about our work and helped streamline our projects. Without all of them, none of this would have been possible.

Additionally, we must thank every single one of our 86 Girl Scouts in troops # 44046, # 44047, and # 44051 for their enthusiasm and hard work during the 2018-19 scouting year. We are so proud of their compassion, and interest in conservation and our environment. The bats certainly have friends in our Girl Scouts.

And finally, I would like to extend warm thanks, on behalf of our troops, to Councilmember Allen and his staff, for inviting our girls to meet with him and present our work and ideas about helping bats. And I'd like to thank the entire DC Council, for scheduling this hearing, and allowing us the opportunity to share our love of bats with all of you.

I am here, along with other members of our troops, to speak on behalf of the proposed legislation to designate a bat as the state mammal of DC.

The girls were all excited to learn about bats, and each and every girl had a lot of ideas about how we could help them. Many of the ideas were very pragmatic, and we were able to

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
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implement them quite easily. You heard about some of them just a few moments ago. My daughter, Ava, wanted the bat to become DC's "mascot." We talked about what was possible to get close to her goal, and that's how our troops started on this journey to propose this legislation.

Sitting with me are three Junior girl scouts from troop # 44051, who will tell you all about our work on this legislation to date, what we've recently learned about the Little Brown bat and the Big Brown bat, and why we're recommending the Big Brown bat as a good candidate to be the state mammal of DC.

Thank you for listening.

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
B23-302, Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019

Testimony of Ava Pannett, Girl Scout Troop # 44051:

My name is **Ava Pannett**, of Girl Scout troop # 44051, and I'm here to tell you about our idea for this legislation.

When we started on our journey learning about bats, the bat experts we met told us that there were actions we could take to help bats. We told you about some of them on the last panel. We planted bat gardens, built bat houses, and donated money.

In Girl Scouts we learn about the difference between doing service projects, which help a problem in the short term, and "taking action" to address an issue in a more sustained way. Building bat houses can help some individual bats directly. But the bats need help from a **lot** of people to survive and thrive. So we wanted to "take action" by helping educate our community about how important bats are, why they're threatened, and learning to tell facts from myths. We hope this will inspire others to help protect bats.

During our cookie sales last year, we spent a lot of time talking with customers about bats, and everyone was really interested in learning more. But our customers were located mostly on Capitol Hill.

We decided that working on this legislation would be a way to spread our message about bats beyond our Capitol Hill community. We thought that designating a bat as the state mammal of DC would be a great way to educate our entire DMV community about bats.

We researched this idea and learned that 22 states have state mammals, including three states that have bats as either their "state flying mammal" or "state bat" – Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia. But DC would be the first jurisdiction in the country to designate a bat as THE state mammal.

Designating state symbols is a big deal, and we think this would be a great way to help educate everyone about bats, and inspire others to take steps to protect bats.

Thank you for listening.

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
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Testimony of Lydia Tiersky, Girl Scout Troop # 44051:

My name is **Lydia Tiersky**, of Girl Scout troop # 44051, and I'm here to talk about what we've recently learned about the Little Brown bat and the Big Brown bat.

The DC region's bats have included the Big Brown bat, Little Brown bat, Tri-colored bat, Northern Long-eared bat, Eastern Red bat, Hoary bat, Silver-haired bat, and the Evening bat.

When our troops were deciding which bat should be the state mammal of DC, we voted from six choices of local bats, and initially, the winner was the Little Brown bat. The Little Brown bat was once one of the most commonly found bat species in our region and it has a lot of important characteristics. And so we submitted legislation asking to name the Little Brown Bat as the state mammal.

However, we have since learned from the DOEE that because of white-nose syndrome, scientists haven't seen the Little Brown bat in our area in several years, although some survive further north. Tri-colored bats and Northern Long-eared bats, which are both local, are also both suffering greatly from white-nose syndrome. The Northern Long-eared bat is federally listed as threatened, and the Tri-colored bat could be very soon.

But there is also a good news story for some of DC's bats. We recently learned that the Big Brown bat, which was also affected by white-nose syndrome, has developed resistance to the fungus that causes the disease, and its populations are persisting. There are other bats around the world and in North America that have also developed resistance, and scientists are studying all of them to learn more about how bats can beat the *Pd* fungus.

Scientists in our area are now working to understand how Big Brown bats have conquered the fungus, in the hopes that it will help other cave dwelling bats in our region. With their help, someday the Little Brown bat may even return to the DMV.

But right now, it is the Big Brown bats that have resisted, and persisted! And it is the Big Brown that we think should be named the state mammal.

Thank you for listening.

Public Hearing before The Committee of the Whole, on
B23-302, Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019

Testimony of Ava Orfield-Shah, Girl Scout Troop # 44051:

My name is **Ava Orfield-Shah**, of Girl Scout troop # 44051, and I'm here to tell you why the Big Brown bat is a great choice for DC's state mammal.

Big Brown bats are currently the most common bat in our region. Anyone can visit any park in DC, and at dusk, when the bats emerge from the trees to forage, it's very likely at least one of the bats they see will be a Big Brown bat.

Big brown bats are considered large for an American bat. They weight about 1 ounce, and their wingspan is 12-16 inches in length. They have copper-brown colored fur on their backs, with lighter belly fur. Their ears are small, and rounded. Their wing membranes and tail are black in color. Big Brown bats can live up to 18-20 years in the wild, and they are reported to be one of the fastest bats, reaching speeds of up to 40 miles per hour.

Females raise their pups in nursery colonies, mating during the fall and winter before they hibernate, and usually give birth to one pup in late spring. The pups are able to fly within four to six weeks.

Big Brown bats feast on insects, including beetles, moths, flies, wasps, and—maybe most importantly in swampy DC—**mosquitoes**, all of which they capture in flight.

Big Brown bats represent our city and also our country and even our continent. They live in every U.S. state except Hawaii and Alaska. Their range extends from parts of Canada down to Mexico, Central America, northern South America, and the Caribbean Islands. They are hardy, and can withstand conditions that other bats can't. Big Brown bats are found “from sea to shining sea”—in almost all habitats from deserts, meadows, and cities, to forests, mountains, and coastal regions.

Because of its broad range, hardiness, adaptability, resistance to the *Pd* fungus, and its persistence in the face of adversity, the Big Brown bat is a perfect choice to represent DC, our nation's capital. We ask the City Council to consider naming the Big Brown bat the state mammal of the District of Columbia.

Thank you for listening.



**Conor Marshall testimony for Committee of the Whole public hearing on Bill 23-302, the
“Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019.”**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Conor Marshall. I’m a Kingman Park resident and a Board Member of Friends of Kingman and Heritage Islands. I speak today on behalf of FOKHI in support of Bill 23-302, the “Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019.” I’d like to thank Councilmember Allen and the Girl Scout troops of the Capitol Hill Cluster School for their work on this issue.

Friends of Kingman and Heritage Islands is a volunteer-run, community-based organization which facilitates stewardship, environmental education, and recreation on the Islands. These natural areas serve as vital wildlife habitat, a vibrant outdoor classroom, and a critical recreation site for the surrounding community. As the bill notes, the local habitat for the Little Brown Bat includes Kingman Island.

As you know, the Anacostia watershed is home to an important natural corridor in a highly urbanized landscape that serves as a valuable component of the larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed. In the spirit of protecting the Bat’s habitat, and the desire to share the Little Brown Bat with future generations, we ask that the Committee pass this legislation. We believe this designation will garner more community awareness and support for the Islands and their wildlife.

Many states have continued to add various official designations, including Pennsylvania with recent designation of the Endangered Eastern Hellbender salamander as the state’s amphibian. These animal symbols add value to local environmental protection and stewardship efforts, connecting the community, especially youth, with wildlife and the natural environment.

D.C.’s official state fish, the American Shad, has become a symbol of the District’s rich biodiversity and has bolstered environmental outreach through adoption by DOEE as an official mascot. I’ve personally witnessed how “Ana the shad” has had a positive impact on environmental education efforts in our community.

If this bill is passed and enacted, FOKHI would commit to sponsoring educational outreach about the Little Brown Bat and its habitat in the District, increasing public awareness of this special mammal. Again, Friends of Kingman and Heritage Islands supports passage of Bill 23-302.

Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to speak in regards to this legislation, and thank you for all do as stewards of the District's precious natural resources. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Conor Marshall

Board Member

Friend of Kingman and Heritage Islands

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Energy and Environment



Public Hearing on
Bill 23-302, the Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019

Testimony of
Lindsay Rohrbaugh
Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Department of Energy and Environment

Before the
Committee of the Whole
Phil Mendelson, Chair
Council of the District of Columbia

January 27, 2020
Room 120
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004



Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairperson Mendelson, Members, and staff of the Committee of the Whole. I am Lindsay Rohrbaugh, a Fish and Wildlife Biologist at the Department of Energy and Environment. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony before you today on Bill 23-23-302, the “Little Brown Bat Official State Mammal Designation Act of 2019.”

DOEE supports the designation of a bat as the District’s State Mammal. Bats are an important part of our local ecosystem, and provide several benefits to District residents, such as insect control and pollination, saving farmers millions of dollars annually on pest control. DOEE has documented eight species of bats living in the District, and all are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) under the District’s Wildlife Action Plan due to habitat loss and disease.

DOEE supports the designation of any local bat as our state mammal, but in choosing a species, there are a few considerations we recommend taking into account. The designation can generate interest in the species, and lead to educational opportunities for the public. For example, designation of our state fish, the American Shad, and our state amphipod, the Hays’s Spring Amphipod, has resulted in opportunities to engage and educate District residents and students about our natural environment.

Designation as a state mammal may sometimes lead to greater efforts to protect a species from threats or extinction, as well. Unfortunately, for the Little Brown Bat, the deadly fungus White-nose Syndrome (WNS), which was discovered in the eastern United States in 2007, has potentially eliminated the species from the District, as far as the data tell us. The last record of the species in the District was in 2004, and the numbers across the northern and mid-Atlantic regions have declined by about 90% over the past decade due to the spread of the disease. Designation of the Little Brown Bat as our state mammal may lead to efforts to survey more intensely for the species and implement greater conservation needs for bats overall, and hopefully the species will return one day, if populations recover.

DOEE supports the designation of the Little Brown Bat as the District’s state mammal, but if the Council wishes to consider other species of bats for designation, you might consider the Big Brown bat, Eastern Red bat, Northern Long-eared bat, or Tri-colored bat. The Big Brown bat is the most common bat in the District and the eastern United States, and was previously affected by White-nose Syndrome, but fortunately has developed a resistance to the fungus in recent years. The Eastern Red bat is the second most common species in the District. Due to the migratory behavior of the species, the Eastern Red bat is not affected by White-nose Syndrome, but unfortunately encounters high mortality rates due to wind turbines. The Northern Long-eared bat and the Tri-colored bat are both cave bats that have seen significant White-nose Syndrome mortality rates, similar to those of the Little Brown bat, but have had small isolated populations within the District survive. The Northern Long-eared bat was recently listed as Threatened on the federal Endangered Species List, and the Tri-colored bat is a candidate species for listing.



DOEE looks forward to working with the Committee as it moves forward with this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



Chairman Mendelson

Chairman, DC Council

Committee of the Whole

RE: Support for B23-0302 – Little brown bat official state mammal designation act of 2019

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

I am Eli Cort-Stone. I think it would be a great idea to have the little brown bat as our state mammal. It is a native species to the district of Colombia. Here's some things I like about the little bat:

1. They eat a lot of insects which is really beneficial to humans.
2. They are super cute.
3. They are social animals like us.

I think the little brown bat is a better state mammal than cats or dogs because they are domestic animals. Rats would not make a good state animal even though we have plenty of them in the city (and my neighborhood).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eli Cort-Stone: age 8, school LAMB, grade 3rd

1438 Florida Ave north west


Government of the District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

FROM: Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer 

DATE: September 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement – Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020

REFERENCE: Bill 23-302, Committee Print provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on September 16, 2020

Conclusion

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 budget and the fiscal year 2021 through fiscal year 2024 budget and financial plan to implement the proposed bill.

Background

The bill designates the Big Brown Bat as the official state flying mammal of the District of Columbia. The bat is found in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States, and it is known for its large size and steady and speedy flight.¹

Financial Plan Impact

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 budget and the fiscal year 2021 through fiscal year 2024 budget and financial plan to implement the proposed bill.

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/big-brown-bat.htm>

1 **DRAFT COMMITTEE PRINT**
2 **Committee of the Whole**
3 **September 22, 2020**
4
5
6

7 A BILL
8

9
10 23-302
11

12
13 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
14
15 _____
16

17 To designate the Big Brown Bat as the official state flying mammal of the District of Columbia.

18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
19 act may be cited as the “Big Brown Bat Official State Flying Mammal Designation Act of 2020”.

20 Sec. 2. Official flying mammal of the District of Columbia.

21 (a) The Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) is a species of mouse-eared bat found
22 throughout the United States, including the District of Columbia.

23 (b) Bats are the only flying mammals. The Big Brown Bat can fly up to 40 miles per
24 hour, one of the fastest bats.

25 (c) The Big Brown Bat is considered large for an American bat, and has a wingspan of
26 12-16 inches and a weight of 14-21 grams. A big brown bat can live up to 18-20 years in the
27 wild.

28 (d) The Big Brown Bat uses echolocation to forage for insects, preferring to eat beetles
29 using their jaws to chew threw the hard exoskeleton, but also eating a variety of other insects
30 including moths, flies, wasps, and flying ants that they capture in flight.

31 (e) The Big Brown Bat has good friends in the Girl Scouts of the Capitol Hill Cluster
32 School, troops 44046, 44047, and 44051, who studied bats and proposed that the Council adopt
33 the Big Brown Bat as the official state mammal of the District of Columbia.

(f) The Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus lucifugus*) is hereby designated the official state flying mammal of the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

Sec. 4. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.