



City of Detroit
Detroit City Council
Council Member Angela Whitfield Calloway
District 2

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Whitaker, Director
Legislative Policy Division

FROM: Council Member Angela Whitfield-Calloway *AWC*

DATE: May 9, 2023

RE: Councilmember Calloway Request for an Ordinance Requiring Bird-Friendly Designs for New Developments

As you may be aware, Detroit is an important stopover site for migratory birds during their annual migration, an essential part of a journey. Over 300 species of birds –including groups facing severe population losses such as warblers, hummingbirds, and flycatchers –migrate through Detroit in spring and fall. Unfortunately, the city's buildings and skyscrapers pose a significant threat to these birds, who often collide with windows and die from their injuries. With more than 3 billion birds lost in the last 50 years, we cannot afford to lose more birds to preventable building collisions. This is a problem that is not unique to Detroit, but it is one that we can address with the right policies and regulations.

I am writing to request that the Legislative Policy Division draft an ordinance requiring bird-friendly building standards for all new construction and major renovation projects. This would require that new development in the City of Detroit include bird-friendly designs that minimize bird collisions while still maintaining aesthetics of the building. This is an important step to help reduce the number of bird fatalities in our city, as well as promoting energy efficiency and sustainable development practices.

A thoughtful approach to design can mitigate bird deaths without significant cost. Studies have shown that bird-friendly window designs, such as patterned glass, can significantly reduce the number of bird collisions. Bird-friendly design and building practices also go hand-in-hand with energy efficiency, as façades with more than 30% glass usually increase costs and CO2 emissions from heating and cooling. By requiring these designs, Detroit can become a leader in promoting environmentally friendly building practices, demonstrating the city's commitment to the conservation of migratory birds and the natural world and honor its designation as the 29th Urban Bird Treaty City in the USA.



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I am urging swift action on this matter and to support the implementation of bird-friendly building standards in Detroit. This is an issue that affects us all, and it is our responsibility to protect the wildlife that shares our city. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns – Ramses Dukes,
ramses.dukes@detroitmi.gov