

The logo is an oval with a yellow background and a black border. Inside the oval, the words "SUSTAINABLE" and "MARYLAND" are written in bold, black, uppercase letters. Below "MARYLAND", the word "CERTIFIED" is written in white, uppercase letters on a red rectangular background.

SUSTAINABLE MARYLAND

CERTIFIED

HELPING COMMUNITIES INVEST TODAY FOR A MORE LIVABLE TOMORROW

Date: February 6, 2023

Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: SB 282 – Maryland Forestry Education Fund - Establishment

Position: Support

RE: Support of SB 282 establishing the Maryland Forestry Education Fund

Dear Senator King and Committee members,

The Sustainable Maryland program strongly supports the creation of the Maryland Forestry Education Fund. It's a measure that is long overdue. The need to expand Forestry Board capacity has significantly grown over the years as the number of people who own forest lands has multiplied, the threats to forest health increase annually, and the need for implementation of best management practices reaches a critical juncture. The Forestry Education Fund would provide for better stewardship education and the ongoing capacity to deliver it, at a modest cost, enabling the Maryland Forestry Foundation to help the Boards and local governments achieve an even greater impact in the years ahead.

The Sustainable Maryland program at the University of Maryland has worked directly with incorporated municipalities for over 10 years, including in more than half of the state's urbanized towns and cities. Our experience providing technical assistance to these communities suggests that this funding will help yield broader and deeper urban forestry awareness and increase the number of in-the ground projects at the local level. The Green Teams that we help organize and support, which include council members, public works staff, foresters and local residents, need to know what resources are available to them in terms of technical assistance and funding. The Forestry Education Fund would function as that essential conduit of information.

Empowered by these resources and assistance, Green Teams will have ability to marshal hundreds of local volunteers for the installation and maintenance of much-needed projects, which will in turn have positive, climate-friendly multiplier effects in their communities,

fostering cleaner air and water, cooler neighborhoods, and greater sense of place. The Green Teams are also the perfect tool for conducting outreach and education to directly to landowners about the importance of trees and green infrastructure, all of which will be managed and supported by the Forestry Education Fund.

Sustainable Maryland has worked with the Maryland Forestry Foundation for many years, and we look forward to the prospect of partnering with them on the implementation of the Forestry Education Fund.

I urge you to vote “Yes” in support SB 282 and the establishment of a long-overdue Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "M. Hunninghake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the last name being a large, stylized 'H'.

Mike Hunninghake
Program Manager
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