



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **House Bill 1511**

Forest Conservation Act – Modifications

Date: March 26, 2024

To: Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee

Position:

**Favorable**

From:

Matt Stegman

Maryland Staff Attorney

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS HB 1511** as amended by the House of Delegates. In its current posture, the bill would require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to update model forest conservation ordinances for local governments by July 1, 2025 and adopt regulations to enforce the Forest Conservation Act by July 1, 2026. The bill also delays the effective date of several provisions of the comprehensive Forest Conservation Act (FCA) update enacted last year.

Ch. 541 passed during the 2023 session updated the state's forest preservation goals while providing new flexibility and tools for local governments and land developers to protect and enhance Maryland's woodlands. This was the first significant update to the FCA since its adoption in 1991. While the urgency to enhance forest protections remains, it is also important that local governments have the appropriate guidance. HB 1511 takes a balanced approach between implementing FCA updates in a timely manner and taking a pause on certain provisions to get implementation right.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE Report on HB 1511.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*