

SENATE BILL 467

M1

5lr2995
CF HB 530

By: **Senator Benson**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2025

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Mandatory Funding – Extension**

3 FOR the purpose of extending the fiscal years in which the Governor is required to include
4 a certain appropriation in the annual budget bill for the Maryland Forestry
5 Education Fund; and generally relating to the Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
7 Article – Natural Resources
8 Section 5–2001
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
12 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

13 **Article – Natural Resources**

14 5–2001.

15 (a) In this section, “Fund” means the Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

16 (b) There is a Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

17 (c) The purpose of the Fund is to expand and enhance:

18 (1) The Maryland Forestry Foundation’s capacity to provide education and
19 resources that support Maryland’s forest landowners;

20 (2) The ability of district forestry boards and the knowledge of local
21 governments in Maryland to achieve:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (i) Environmental, economic, and social sustainability of forest
2 health; and

3 (ii) The sustainable management of forest resources; and

4 (3) The ability of businesses to test innovative best management practices
5 in forestry.

6 (d) The Maryland Forestry Foundation shall administer the Fund.

7 (e) (1) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7–302 of
8 the State Finance and Procurement Article.

9 (2) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately, and the
10 Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

11 (f) The Fund consists of:

12 (1) Money appropriated in the State budget to the Fund;

13 (2) Interest earnings; and

14 (3) Any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the
15 Fund.

16 (g) The Fund may be used only for:

17 (1) Providing training and education to forest landowners, district forestry
18 boards, and local governments to ensure the landowners, boards, and governments are well
19 informed on advances and developments in:

20 (i) Healthy forest management;

21 (ii) Ecological service markets;

22 (iii) Emerging forestry threats;

23 (iv) Climate science;

24 (v) Forest conservation;

25 (vi) Urban forestry;

26 (vii) Sustainability science;

27 (viii) Forestry policy;

1 (ix) Forestry practices; and

2 (x) Resource options that promote the multiple benefits of forest
3 management;

4 (2) Providing outreach and engagement that builds local capacity and
5 institutionalizes sustainability efforts within communities and the district forestry boards,
6 including:

7 (i) Holding a forest sustainability conference once every 2 years;

8 (ii) Implementing a peer-to-peer learning exchange; and

9 (iii) Providing healthy forest presentations;

10 (3) Developing and expanding a healthy forest education and conservation
11 program;

12 (4) Improving the outreach of district forestry boards by providing
13 education, recognition, strategies, and actions the boards can implement;

14 (5) Providing small grants to district forestry boards, forest landowners,
15 local governments, and businesses to test innovative best management practices in
16 forestry;

17 (6) Recognizing the efforts forest landowners and local governments make
18 toward achieving healthy, sustainable forest management; and

19 (7) Expenses related to the administration of the Fund.

20 (h) (1) The State Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the same
21 manner as other State money may be invested.

22 (2) Any interest earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the Fund.

23 (i) Expenditures from the Fund may be made only in accordance with the State
24 budget.

25 (j) Money expended from the Fund for the outreach, training, education, and
26 grants under subsection (g) of this section is supplemental to and is not intended to take
27 the place of funding that otherwise would be appropriated for forestry education and
28 outreach.

29 (k) For fiscal years 2025 [and 2026] **THROUGH 2031**, the Governor shall include
30 in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$250,000 to the Fund.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
2 1, 2025.