



**Committee:** Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

**Testimony on:** HB991 Natural Resources- Forest Mitigation Banks- Qualified Preservation

**Organization:** WISE

**Submitting:** Monica O'Connor

**Position:** Unfavorable

**Date:** March 31, 2021

Dear Chairman Barve and members of the Committee

WISE strongly opposes HB 991 Natural Resources – Forest Mitigation Banks – Qualified Preservation.

WISE is a grassroots organization of over 500 women in Anne Arundel County. As an organization we have worked hard to elect representative who support strong forest conservation practices and curb runaway development. Our County suffered tree loss to development for years – to the detriment of the Chesapeake Bay and communities throughout the County. We are deeply concerned that unless loopholes to forest mitigation plans are rectified developers will once again take advantage of faulty laws extreme tree loss will continue. HB199 is a bill that allow such loopholes and as such we stand in opposition to this bill.

We urge you to vote unfavorably on this bill – or, at the least, to amend accordingly.

1. ***Require the completion of the Hughes Center Study by December 1, 2021.***
2. ***Sunset the legislation July 1, 2022. This will allow the General Assembly to revisit this topic with the results of the Study in the 2022 Session.***

If the bill is passed out of Committee without these amendments, our posture will be in opposition to this bill.