



Testimony in Support of **House Bill 1133-Tree Plantings - Urban Trees Program and Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings**

February 24, 2021

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB1133 - Tree Plantings - Urban Trees Program and Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings** - on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with 3,500 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration and education.

There is a distinct lack of tree canopy and native species tree populations within historic municipalities and underserved communities of the Eastern Shore, and we are in need of state support to remedy this problem. Tree plantings are a cornerstone in our efforts to retrofit stormwater management practices, reduce runoff, sequester carbon and cool pavement and other impermeable surfaces. Environmental organizations like ShoreRivers are leading the charge to advocate and implement these practices. **Increased funding for the implementation and maintenance of trees in municipalities will extend our ability to take on new projects, increase our momentum to complete them, and provide resources for participating communities and municipalities to maintain projects for years to come.**

ShoreRivers has experience working with historical and underserved communities on the Eastern Shore with tree planting programs. These programs usually consist of conducting an urban tree canopy assessment and planting plan which allows the community to take stock of their existing canopy coverage and strategically plan and prioritize ways to increase that coverage to maximize benefits such as water quality treatment. The Town of Chestertown, Town of Easton, Town of Greensboro and the City of Cambridge have completed these assessments, giving them the appropriate tools and guidance to implement meaningful urban tree canopy programs. **However, the necessary capital investment from these rural and often underserved communities stands in the way of actually carrying out the tree planting and maintenance work.**

Increased funding through this bill will provide the support needed for these communities that are already set-up to carry out this important work. For this reason and the examples described above, ShoreRivers urges the committee to adopt **House Bill 1133**.

Sincerely,

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper and Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper on behalf of:

ShoreRivers

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