



**SIERRA
CLUB**

7338 Baltimore Ave
Suite 102
College Park, MD 20740

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB1133 – “Tree Planting – Urban Trees Program and Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 24, 2021

The Maryland Sierra Club supports HB1133 which sets a goal of planting 500,000 trees in urban areas throughout Maryland, and establishes programs and processes to accomplish this.

Urban tree planting is particularly vital given the beneficial impacts on cities’ air quality through the absorption of air pollutants by tree leaves. Just one maple tree filters 15 pounds of ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide from the air, saves 570 KWh of electricity for cooling and heating, intercepts 27,000 gallons of rainfall, and avoids 4,800 gallons of runoff over the course of 20 years.¹ Just think of the positive effect in Maryland, which ranks 22nd nationally in air pollution,² with the addition of a half million new trees!

This type of program has proved very feasible in other cities.³ A human-made forest as small as 130 square feet can create a dense, native, maintenance-free forest in as little as two to three years.⁴ A co-benefit is that urban forestry and green professions are growth industries with an annual economic impact of \$147.8 billion and the potential to provide tens of thousands of new jobs.⁵

We also have the potential to make progress toward reversing inequities in urban tree cover throughout Maryland and incentivize tree plantings with the establishment of a Maryland-based carbon offset market. These markets have been found to support tree planting and decrease emissions by about four percent.⁶

We urge a favorable report of HB 1133.

Lily Fountain
Natural Places Committee Chair
Lily.Fountain@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

¹ iTree (2019). Tree Benefits. <https://www.itreetools.org/cta-tree-benefits>.

² America’s Health Rankings (2020). <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/air/state/MD>

³ Ulmer, J. M., et al. (2016). Multiple health benefits of urban tree canopy: The mounting evidence for a green prescription. *Health and Place*, 42, 54-62.

⁴ Miyawaki Method of Forest Creation. <https://www.afforestt.com/methodology>.

⁵ Peterson, C. L., Brandt, L. A., Elias, E. H., & Hurteau, S. R. (2021), Community forests prepare for climate change. *Eos*, 102, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2021EO154456>. Published on 11 February 2021.

⁶ Bayer, P. & Aklın, M. (2020). The European Union Emissions Trading System reduced CO2 emissions despite low Prices. *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 117 (16), 8804-8812. <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/16/8804#:~:text=According%20to%20our%20estimates%2C%20EU,the%20possibility%20of%20carbon%20leakage>.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.