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BILL NO.: HB 991

TITLE: Natural Resources – Forest Mitigation Banks – Qualified Preservation

SPONSOR: Delegate Gilchrist

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

DATE: March 31, 2021

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 991 – Natural Resources – Forest Mitigation Banks – Qualified Preservation. This legislation would authorize the use of qualified preservation in a forest mitigation bank as a standard for meeting afforestation requirements under the Forest Conservation Act.

Forest conservation is not only important for aesthetics and recreation, but it has vital impacts on species biodiversity, landscape maintenance and human health. Baltimore County has worked diligently to protect the environment by implementing bold strategies that allow for both development and conservation. However, as populations grow and areas modernize, new strategies to further forest conservation efforts are critical for the long term health of the County and the State.

By enabling the use of forest mitigation banks for meeting afforestation requirements, this legislation would aid Baltimore County in its commitment to conservation. It would allow the County to use these banks in current conservation planning to help restore deforested areas. House Bill 991 will help all jurisdictions reforest their landscapes, protect the environment and improve the lives of residents.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 991. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs, at cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov.