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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 19, 2021

House Bill 322

Real Property – Restrictions on Use – Low Impact Landscaping

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice-Chairman Stein, and Committee Members,

HB322 is the reintroduction of the 2020 Session's HB 279 which passed this committee 23-1, and the House floor 133-2. It was referred to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee a week before our pandemic related unexpected and premature adjournment. Li

HB322 is in the same posture as the legislation we passed. It protects individual homeowners from Home Owner Association (HOA) imposition of unreasonable limitations on a property owner's efforts to install low-impact landscaping, defined as landscaping techniques that conserve water, lower maintenance costs, provide pollution prevention, and create habitat for wildlife.

Consistent with the need for all of us to take greater personal responsibility for mitigating against the existential impacts of climate change HB322 strikes the correct balance between those interest and the communal interest of protecting property values and assuring maintenance of standards that is a prime objective of most HOAs. The Community Associations Institute supports this legislation.

Use of low impact landscaping techniques reduces the amounts of dangerous chemicals used in gardening and lawn maintenance, gasoline used by mowers, toxic and carcinogenic pollutants emitted into the air, water used to maintain lawns and non-sustainable gardens and should be encourage.

Sustainable gardening reduces storm water runoff into the Chesapeake Bay; bio-habitat and pollinator gardens support pollinator-friendly birds and increasing fruit harvest); rain gardens make soil healthier by filtering excess nutrients; Xeriscaping reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation; and planting more trees cleans the air we breathe – all of these are elements of low-impact landscaping.

Because of how use and non-use of such practices effects all of us, it is appropriate for us to look for ways of encouraging such efforts while not undermining the important role of the HOA. Passing HB322 will be doing exactly that.

I respectfully request you again vote in favorably.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri L. Hill'.