



Testimony: HB 1133 Urban Tree Planting Bill
Position: Favorable
Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee
Hearing Date: February 24, 2021

Safe Skies Maryland is a statewide conservation initiative with members representing a diverse and active body of citizens seeking to advance sustainability. We advocate for birds and other wildlife and their relationship with human quality of life.

Tree plantings in underserved areas will help Maryland address longstanding inequities

- The 500,000-tree planting goal for underserved urban communities could help reverse inequities through addressing the urban heat island effect, delivering improved health and mental health outcomes, and increasing property values and social connections
- Urban trees are proven to be one of the most cost-effective water quality filters, cleaning streams and rivers, and creating a healthy environment for aquatic life and people that swim and fish local waterways

Trees capture carbon and deliver a host of co-benefits

- Trees capture carbon and deliver a host of co-benefits including serving as one of the most cost-effective natural filters of polluted runoff
- The Commission established in HB 1133 will design a tree planting plan to mitigate heat deserts, maximize water quality, air quality, and carbon sequestration
- Native trees are also especially critical habitat for wildlife throughout the state
- Wildlife, especially migratory songbirds, provide one of the most enjoyable and healthful connections to nature for urban communities with trees

Maryland-based carbon offset market could support additional tree plantings after the expiration of this bill

- This bill envisions a Commission that would draw on existing expertise to develop a plan for establishing a carbon offset market in Maryland
- A carbon offset market could help support additional tree plantings by drawing on private investment

HB 1133 would be one of the most cost-effective means of improving the quality of life in underserved communities, while providing climate mitigation and environment benefits for all.

We are asking for a favorable report on HB 1133.

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