



Bill Number: HB-1133 – “Tree Planting – Urban Trees Program and Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings”

Name: Peter Alexander, PhD

Position: Favorable

RE: Testimony before the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 24, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County MD. I am writing in support of **HB-1133**, which establishes a program supplemental to the plan mandated by the 2019 Draft Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan to plant 500,000 trees in underserved areas of the State by the end of December 2030.

HB 1133 establishes progress toward reversing inequities in urban tree cover throughout Maryland and as well as furthering establishment of a Maryland-based carbon offset market to support more tree plantings.

Tree plantings in underserved areas will help Maryland address longstanding inequities

This legislation’s 500,000 tree planting goal for underserved urban communities could help reverse inequities through addressing 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 marine life. This protects the health and safety of those who swim and fish from local waterways.

Trees capture carbon and deliver a host of co-benefits

The planting of trees in urban areas serve 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 desserts, maximize water quality, air quality, and carbon sequestration. Native trees are also especially critical habitat for wildlife throughout the state.

A 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.

We urge a favorable report.

Peter Alexander, PhD
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