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Testimony in Support of
House Bill 1140 Natural Resources - Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program – Establishment
Environment and Transportation Committee
March 01, 2022

The Rural Maryland Council supports House Bill 1140 - Natural Resources - Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program – Establishment. This bill will increase the market for Maryland’s foresters and prevent the spread of pests and disease by establishing the Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program in the Department of Natural Resources which will certify forest product operators who export firewood to other states and use certain treatments to prevent the pests and pathogens in the firewood products

Through the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund, the RMC funded a project by the Upper Shore Regional Council for "heat treatment" designed to replace the hazardous fumigant methyl-bromide (Mbr), phosphene and sulfuryl fluoride in the treatment of high-value logs and other commodities for export. In 2016, the Port of Baltimore banned the use of Mbr, which continues to have a negative economic impact on foresters. The certification in HB-1140 would allow for those selling firewood to use a method like heat treatment to treat their products and still be able to sell outside of the State.

Certifying that a producer properly treats their products will allow them to sell outside of the State and creates more economic production. The goal is to enable the highest value raw forest products to re-enter the supply chain. This has direct favorable consequences across the industry, most recently measured to directly employ 8,000 workers and supports another 7,000. These workers made products and provided services resulting in \$3.4 billion of wealth creation. For the public’s benefit, these goods and services generated \$132.5 million in state and local taxes. (BEACON 2017). HB-1140 will assist in continuing to provide the economic impacts that forest products have in Maryland

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of House Bill 1140.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”