



March 9, 2022

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

From: *Gary Allen, President, Maryland Forestry Foundation*

Re: Support of SB 791 Maryland the Beautiful act

Mr. Chairman and members My name is Gary G Allen, President, Maryland Forestry Foundation. We would like to thank Senator Elfreth for advancing this bill. I would like to briefly focus your attention on the Bills support for the Mel Nolan Woodland Incentive fund.

The Mel Noland Woodland Incentive Fund is the state's oldest landowner cost share program. It was created in 1988 with funding derived from a capped amount from the state's land transfer tax based on sale of 100% wooded property. The CAP is \$200,000. It has never been adjusted in 33 years.

Why add funds?

Since creation of the fund over half the counties have never contributed meaning in a sense no woodland land sales occurred there??? This is a significant handicap because of the application of the 100% woodland definition counts existing structures and access roads as mitigating circumstances. Plus, it's easier for local accessors to classify sales as Ag land and then not have to deal with woodland assessment issues

SB 791 avoids a debate over current tax policy and land classification challenges to provide needed resources for the Mel fund to address the authorized uses of the fund.

What will additional funds be used for?

Present law allows 18 program needs to be addressed. SUCH AS:

To offset costs to develop and approve forest management plans and forest conservation plans, and support landowner outreach to encourage them

To support forest health emergency management and programs maintain forest health on both public and privately owned forest lands,

Prevent degradation of forest lands,

Support urban and community forestry programs,

Increase the number communities with urban tree canopy goals

Facilitate tree planting goals

Assist in the development of carbon credit programs,
forest mitigation banking and
clean water credit programs.

Clearly, the breath of ambition set by these objectives far exceeds the current funding available. We ask you favorable support of SB 791 with its annual commitment to the Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund.

Gary G Allen
President, Maryland Forestry Foundation