To: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee of the Senate
Testimony on: HB 884 State Conservation Land - Old-Growth Forests - Protection
Submitting: Jerry Henger
Position: Favorable with Amendments
Hearing Date: 3.30.2022

To the Honorable Chair Pinsky and all members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee of the Senate:

I am writing in favor of HB 884:

Old-growth forests are a gift from Nature (spared by man) and should not be cut down.

If the Mona Lisa were a tree, would we cut if down; if a 300-year tree was a 1959 Cadillac, would we send it to the junk yard for scrap metal. Of course not.

The few remaining old growth forests and every old growth tree must be saved and protected. These trees and forests store the most carbon and are vitally important for biodiversity and help fight against climate change. And we are in the fight of our lives, a fight for the health of the planet, a fight for the quality of our lives, the air we breathe, the water we drink. Climate change will impact the crops we can grow, and just about every other aspect of life as we know it. We must do everything we can to slow it down.

Old growth forests are rare; you can't make them overnight, or in 20 or 50 years. It is estimated that in Maryland only a fraction of forests are old growth. Most biologists believe (and me too) that all remaining old growth areas should be preserved. Maryland should begin formally preserving the old-growth forests on its public lands.

From my understanding of this bill, it will formalize protection for old-growth forests owned by the State of Maryland. These forests that have been standing for hundreds of years will remain standing through future political changes. And will be looked upon and marveled at by our children and grandchildren, and we get to enjoy them right now.

I recommend a favorable report on this important bill with the amendments. Thank you for listening.

 Sincerely,

Jerry Henger
423 Wingate Road
Baltimore, Maryland
jhenger@msn.com
443-799-7975