



March 30,2022

To: Senate Education, Health, and Environment Committee

From: Gary Allen, President, Maryland Forestry Foundation

Re: Support of HB 876 Forestry Education fund

Mr. Chairman and members My name is *Gary G Allen, President, Maryland Forestry Foundation. We would like to thank Delegate Stein for advancing this bill. I would like to call your attention to the written testimony submitted by Maryland's last regular State Forester in support of this legislation. He underlines both the need for forestry education and the lack of capacity within state government to address it. The Forestry Foundation was created over thirty years ago to assist the local forestry Boards to raise funds to achieve their mission to provide stewardship education to Maryland's private forest landowners and local government assistance in outreach.*

*As the number of landowners and threats to healthy forest resources have grown new tools and resources are required. HB 876 is a modest step to strengthen the capacity of the forest community to address this goal. We want to use the example created to address similar needs in the agriculture community when the Agricultural Education Foundation was created and funded by the legislature. The Forestry Foundation is that organization and now we ask you support for an education fund operating within the parameters set by this legislation to work with both **rural and urban landowners, volunteers and professionals** to better provide access to the best management practices available to strengthen their stewardship of Maryland forest resources, better ensure its diversity and continue to preserve it as vital for water quality climate science and the broad array of ecological and social services that all benefit from. We ask you favorable support of HB 876.*

*Gary G Allen,
President, Maryland Forestry Foundation*

See attached testimony from Mr. Don Vanhassent former State forester and Ms. Joli McCathran chairman of the Association of State forestry Boards.

HB876 – Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment **support**

My name is Donald VanHassent. I worked for the DNR-Forest Service for forty years before retiring in December of 2019. The last five and a half years I served as the Director and State Forester. The fourteen years before that I was an Associate Director with the Forest Service.

Among the many activities the Forest Service performed was forestry education. We realized a long time ago that most people really didn't know or understand what forests were, what they had to offer, what they could provide, nor did they know or understand what forest management was. Sure, they knew there were trees there, it was a good place to hike or hunt and sometimes trees were harvested for wood products. But they did not understand the things they could not see – the positive effect forests have on water and air quality, the habitat for animals and plants (both rare and common), and economic impacts to both the forest landowner and the public.

To help address this issue the Forest Service had a program to conduct educational seminars, school programs, booths at county fairs, etc. We had a small group of employees who had this as their focus while others helped on specific events. Many of these events were conducted in cooperation with the county forest Conservancy District Boards. This changed almost twenty years ago. Budget challenges required a serious look at all aspects of the Forest Service with the intent that something will be cut. It was a very difficult decision, but the Forest Service cut the forestry education program. We felt this would eventually come back to bite us at some point we just didn't know when.

So, here we are, almost twenty years later and we are still facing the many of the same issues. There are approximately 700,000 more citizens in Maryland, probably less forest land although strong action at state and local levels have reduced the amount lost. We need a strong, focused effort to renew forestry education efforts in Maryland. HB876 is an excellent first step and I urge you to vote favorably on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald VanHassent
Maryland State Forester, retired



Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards

**2 the Circle
Washington Grove, MD 20880**

March 25, 2022

Dear Chair and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Joli McCathran and I am the President of the Maryland Association of Forestry Boards. I am testifying on behalf of the 24 Maryland counties forestry boards, including the City of Baltimore, in support for HB-876 to establish the Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

The Forestry Boards were established in 1943 by law in Maryland to assist the State's Forest Park and Wildlife Service, now the Department of Natural Resources, to outreach to landowners on forest management practices on privately owned woodlands state-wide. It is the job of these boards to offer these services to education and assist in working with Maryland's forest landowners.

We seek the funds to better education the over 250 forestry board volunteers to serve the citizens of Maryland in attaining their goals. This service now expands beyond just the production of wood products and cover such concerns as restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, addressing urban and suburban environ as well as rural areas, and to education the public.

HB 876 will enhance the ability and effectiveness of forestry board members in conjunction with DNR in achieving our mission, which is: *To promote the stewardship, conservation, and sustainable use of Maryland's Forest Resource.* I strongly seek your support of HB 876.

Sincerely yours,

Joli A. McCathran
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