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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 695 Natural Resources - Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program - Establishment
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the distinguished Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for allowing me to present **Senate Bill 695 Natural Resources - Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program - Establishment**. This legislation establishes the Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program in the Department of Natural Resources to certify forest product operators who export firewood to other states and use heat treatment and other procedures to prevent the presence of wood pests in the firewood products. The program authorized by SB 695 is voluntary, applying only to those operators with commercial firewood dry kilns who would like state certification.

The sense of urgency to establish a firewood treatment certification program at the state level at this time is due to the United States Department of Agriculture's decision earlier this year to end its certification of commercial dry kiln operations for firewood for controlling the spread of Emerald Ash Borders (EAB). Since Maryland currently does not have a certification program nor the statutory authority to create one, SB 695 is necessary to allow existing operators in Maryland to continue to export their firewood products to other states.

The certification program can be established at a minimal cost in the Department of Natural Resources and will have a strong, positive impact on Maryland's forestry business by continuing existing export sales and by providing new opportunities to export firewood to other states. Maryland Forest Association leadership Beth Hill and Joe Hinson, and American Forest Industries representative Bill Miles will go into more detail on the importance of this legislation to Maryland's Forest Industry.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 695 –establishing a voluntary certification program at the state level to allow Maryland's forest operators to continue to export their firewood products to other states. Thank you for your kind consideration.