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February 25, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of Chesapeake Conservancy, I write to urge your support for HB 884, a bill that would establish protections for old-growth forests located on state conservation lands such as parks, wildlife management areas and Rural Legacy Areas.

Old-growth forests are incredibly rare and unique, encompassing .01% of forestland in Maryland. These forests are described as “old-growth” because they have avoided a major disturbance event like logging and contain a significant number of trees that will exceed the normal lifespan of a given tree species. These forests are also incredibly important from an ecological standpoint. Old-growth forests store more carbon and nitrogen than other forests. They provide exceptional habitat for birds and wildlife.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources completed an inventory of old-growth forests on state lands in 2007, identifying about 2,300 acres on 40 separate forested tracts of land. Despite other existing designations such as “wildlands” areas, a portion of Maryland’s old-growth forests found on state land remain unprotected. HB 884 would address this gap in protection and would protect Maryland’s remaining old-growth forests found within state conservation lands.

Old-growth forests are a rare and unique living resource that have existed throughout centuries of Maryland’s history. Maryland should protect what’s left of these remaining forests.

Thank you for considering this legislation, and I urge your support for HB 884.

Sincerely,



Joel Dunn
President and CEO
Chesapeake Conservancy