

**HB 876\_FAV\_MML.pdf**

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey

Position: FAV



## Maryland Municipal League

*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

# TESTIMONY

March 4, 2022

**Committee:** House Environment and Transportation Committee

**Bill:** \_\_\_\_\_ HB 876 – Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment

**Position:** Support

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 876, which establishes a Forestry Education Fund with the goal of environmental, economic, and social sustainability of forest health.

Local governments benefit greatly from healthy forests and sustainable forest management. This fund could provide grants to local governments to test innovative best management practices and provide resources like training and education to municipal leaders to further municipal forest growth.

The Maryland Municipal League greatly appreciates the Sponsor's intent and respectfully requests a favorable committee report on House Bill 876.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Scott A. Hancock	Executive Director
Angelica Bailey	Director, Government Relations
Bill Jorch	Director, Research and Policy Analysis
Justin Fiore	Manager, Government Relations

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# **HB876.ShoreRivers.Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Annie Richards

Position: FAV



Testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB876– Maryland Forestry Education Fund

March 4, 2022

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB876** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland’s Eastern Shore with over 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

The Eastern Shore is one of the least treed areas in Maryland due to agricultural land use. **At ShoreRivers, we know that large stands of trees are critical for water quality and runoff pollution mitigation.** As the Chester Riverkeeper, I work with local counties to protect what mature forests exist in the Chester’s watershed, with an understanding that the positive effects for water health are not the only benefits forests can bring to a community and its economy when done sustainably.

This bill will increase education and support for district forestry boards and landowners for healthy forest management, ecological service markets, emerging forest threats, climate science, forest conservation, urban forestry, sustainable science, forestry policy and best practices. It will also provide small grants for landowners to trial innovative best practices on their forest lands.

**We support this bill for increased forestry education and resources because trees are one of the most positive long-term investments that can be made to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay,** and many of our trees are threatened by the ongoing effects of climate change, as well as development activities within our watersheds. By educating our counties and our communities on the importance and value of our mature forests, and by connecting individuals with the resources to better steward privately owned forests, we can increase our chances of protecting and increasing forest canopy across our region.

For these reasons stated above, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB876**.

Sincerely,

**Annie Richards**

Chester Riverkeeper, on behalf of:

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***ShoreRivers***

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

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## **HB876\_Stein\_Testimony**

Uploaded by: Delegate Stein Delegate Stein

Position: FAV

DANA M. STEIN  
*Legislative District 11*  
Baltimore County

—  
*Vice Chair*  
Environment and Transportation  
Committee

*Subcommittees*  
Chair, Environment  
Natural Resources,  
Agriculture and Open Space



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*The Maryland House of Delegates*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of HB 876**  
**Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment**

Chairman Barve and Fellow Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

Last year, the Maryland General Assembly passed a bill to plant 5 million trees over 8 years. For several years in a row, we've heard testimony on issues related to the Forest Conservation Act—designed to protect forest acreage in the state. We've also learned in the past few years how important forests—especially old-growth forests—are to carbon sequestration—the removal of carbon from our atmosphere to be stored in the earth.

As members of ENT, we know a lot about the importance of forests to the state. But, what about the average citizen of Maryland—particularly the millions of residents in urban areas of the state?

Twenty years ago, the Forest Service within the Department of Natural Resources had an education program that conducted seminars, school programs, and other educational outreach programs that taught that forests were really about more than just trees. That program was eliminated when the agency was downsized from over 130 to about 70 staff. The Maryland Forest Service still does not have enough staff to conduct outreach and education about our forests.

The purpose of HB 876 is to build the capacity of existing tools, such as the Maryland Forestry Foundation (an independent 501c3) and district forestry boards, which were created as a means of outreach to forest landowners. This bill would create a Maryland Forest Education Fund that would provide education and resources to Maryland's forest landowners and local governments for specific purposes, such as healthy forest management, climate science, forest conservation, urban forestry, and other related purposes listed in the bill.

Maryland has long recognized the need to educate residents on the important role agriculture plays in the state by funding the Maryland Agricultural Foundation in 1989 authorizing the creation and sale of Agricultural license plates in 200. Just as the purpose of the AG Foundation is to educate citizens about the important role agriculture plays in the state, the Maryland Forestry Foundation, through this fund, would do the same for our forests.

I urge you to support HB 876.



# **HB876\_Vanhassent\_FAV**

Uploaded by: Donald VanHassent

Position: FAV



March 2, 2022

HB876 – Maryland Forestry Education Fund - Establishment

Dear House Environment and Transportation Committee Members,

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 general 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 primary duty 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 many of the same issues. There are approximately 700,000 more citizens in Maryland, probably less forest land although strong actions 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*

Donald VanHassent  
State Forester, retired

**HB0876-ET\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: D'Paul Nibber

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND**  
*Association of*  
**COUNTIES**

## House Bill 876

### *Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: March 4, 2022

From: Dominic J. Butchko and D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 876. This bill would establish the Maryland Forest Education Fund under the Maryland Forestry Foundation. This fund is meant to provide additional educational resources to local governments for forest conservation.

Maryland's forests are one of her most fantastic natural resources. Preserving those resources is critical both for a healthy environment and for a thriving economy. Counties have been at the forefront of forest preservation, as can be seen from the numerous conservation efforts in each jurisdiction. By establishing a fund under the Maryland Forestry Foundation, this bill would enhance the Foundation's ability to conduct outreach and education efforts, aiding local governments in preserving more forest land.

HB 876 would build on the work of counties by providing additional resources for local government leaders in the forest conservation field. Accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 876.

**HB 876 testimony house ENV and T 3-4-22 DV-GA.pdf**

Uploaded by: gary allen

Position: FAV



March 4, 2022

To: House Environment and transportation 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 Bboards to raised 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 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 Don Vanhassent*

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 general 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 main 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

# **HB 876 Sprouls Position.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jason Sprouls

Position: FAV

Members of the General Assembly:

I would like to voice my support in favor of House Bill 876 (HB876), an act concerning the Maryland Forestry Education Fund. With the passing of the Urban Trees Program (HB 991), called for by the Maryland General Assembly as a component of a 5,000,000-tree goal by 2031, I believe that a concerted effort needs to be made to increase the capacity of education and outreach programs for the Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

Urban forests are a combination of both the natural resources (trees, greenspaces) and the socio-political conditions of a city. Historic policies of racial and spatial segregation resulted in inequities which have enduring effects on the ways cities function socially, economically, and ecologically. These systemic forces have mechanisms linked to urban forest distribution, as evidence shows that low income and minority residents often live-in areas with disproportionately low tree canopy cover. The legacy impacts of these policies influence the values and meanings racially diverse people attribute to trees. Oftentimes, people of color are resistant to tree planting programs, citing concerns about long-term management of city trees to avoid the negative financial, safety, and aesthetic consequences for their neighborhood and properties.

To support the expansion of urban trees in these historically disadvantaged communities, urban forestry must be founded on policies that promote inclusion and integrate education to increase the value assigned to trees. By understanding the importance that diverse peoples attach to urban forests, we can clarify perspectives and priorities to make it easier to direct urban forest management. Furthermore, through education practitioners can move closer to the public at large and communicate values, include residents in decision-making, and to identify and achieve shared goals.



**HB0876-ET-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**HB 876**

March 4, 2022

**TO:** Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee  
**FROM:** Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations  
**RE:** House Bill 876 – Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment  
**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 876.

HB 876 establishes the Maryland Forestry Education Fund to expand and enhance the Maryland Forestry Foundation's capacity to provide certain education and resources to forest landowners. The bill would further the ability of district forestry boards and the knowledge of local governments to achieve healthy and sustainable forests while allowing businesses to test innovative best management practices in forestry. The fund proposed in HB 876 would support urban forestry, forestry practices healthy forest management, ecological service markets, and emerging forestry threats in relation to climate science among other activities. Annual funding allocated through the bill would be \$750,000.

Trees are essential to healthy, thriving communities, especially for urban environments such as Baltimore City. In the *Trees and Forests* chapter of the city's 2019 Sustainability Plan, Baltimore outlines strategies and actions to advance the city's tree canopy and protect existing trees:

Strategy 1: Plant and establish more trees ensuring equitable planting distribution.

Strategy 2: Assess and manage the city's tree canopy for long-term health.

Strategy 3: Preserve the city's existing tree canopy.

HB 876 goals align with these strategies and could potentially provide critical funding to protect and expand the city's tree canopy, attenuate the urban heat island effect in areas with limited green space and support cleaner air across the greater Baltimore region and the entire state.

The Maryland Forestry Education Fund proposed under HB 876 will provide knowledge and support to forestry boards and local governments, strengthening their ability to promote the protection and sustainable management of local forests and engage communities in forest stewardship. The activities supported by the fund will also help local jurisdictions to incorporate future climate conditions in forest management decisions and develop long-term strategies to promote the health and sustainable management of local forests.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill (HB) 876.

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**HB 876\_CBF SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robin Jessica Clark

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **House Bill 876**

Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment

Date: February 23, 2022

Position: Support

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Doug Myers, Maryland Senior Scientist

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 876 which establishes a Maryland Forestry Education Fund to enhance and expand Maryland Forestry Foundation's education programs for forest landowners.

Much of Maryland's forests are in the possession of private landowners. The decisions these landowners make can have significant consequences for the environment including water quality protection, fish and wildlife habitat and mitigation of greenhouse gases among others. HB 876 expands the scope of forest landowner training programs by providing up-to-date information on sustainable forestry practices and ecosystem services.

Landowners, forestry boards, and local governments can integrate this information into forest management plans that protect forest functions while maintaining profitability of the forest resource. CBF especially welcomes education on climate science, forest conservation, and urban forestry as these topics are often missing from traditional forest education programs.

Building local capacity, institutionalizing sustainability, and peer-to-peer education are all tenants of a successful model for regenerative agriculture. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation appreciates this legislation's efforts to improve forest stewardship through forestry education.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 876.** For more information, please contact Robin Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at [rclark@cbf.org](mailto:rclark@cbf.org) and 443.995.8753.

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*

# **HB 876 MD Forestry Educ Fund (Stein) E&T 2.23.22 S**

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO



# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN  
*Governor*

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD  
*Lieutenant Governor*

DAVID R. BRINKLEY  
*Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

## HOUSE BILL 876 Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment (Stein)

### STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

**DATE:** March 4, 2022

**COMMITTEE:** House Environment & Transportation

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** HB 876 mandates an annual appropriation in the amount of \$750,000 in FY 2024 and FY 2025 to expand and enhance the Maryland Forestry Foundation’s capacity to provide certain education and resources to forest landowners, the ability of district forestry boards and the knowledge of local governments to achieve healthy and sustainable forests, and the ability of businesses to test innovative best management practices in forestry.

**EXPLANATION:** The Department of Budget and Management’s focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the \$750,000 mandated appropriation provision, which impacts the FY 2024 and FY 2025 budgets.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which will require spending allocations for FY 2024 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2022.

Changes to the Maryland Constitution in 2020 provide the General Assembly with additional budgetary authority, beginning in the 2023 Session, to realign total spending by increasing and adding items to appropriations in the budget submitted by the Governor. The legislature’s new budgetary power diminishes, if not negates, the need for mandated appropriation bills.

Fully funding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (Kirwan) will require fiscal discipline in the years ahead, if the State is to maintain the current projected structural budget surpluses. Mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of this education funding priority and the Governor’s tax relief proposals.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19. High rates of inflation and workforce shortages may be short lived or persist, thereby impacting the Maryland economy. While current budget forecasts project structural surpluses, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability. The Department continues to urge the General Assembly to focus on maintaining the structural budget surplus.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at (410) 260-6371  
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