

March 2, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Environment & Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251,  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD, 21401

**RE: Support HB 960 Natural Resources - Forest Mitigation Banks and the Forest Conservation Fund - Alterations**

Dear Chairman Barve:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **HB 960 Natural Resources - Forest Mitigation Banks and the Forest Conservation Fund - Alterations**. MBIA **Supports** the Act in its current version.

This bill would alter the definition of “qualified conservation” and extend the number of growing seasons that the Forest Conservation Fund has to complete reforestation or afforestation. MBIA respectfully supports this measure. Forest Mitigation Banking is an important component of the States Forest Conservation Act that both conserves and manages existing forest and plants new forest in high priority areas, especially large contiguous tracts of forest. Additionally, Forest Banking can only be utilized to satisfy mitigation requirements once all other conservation and mitigation options in the laws list of priorities has been exhausted.

Mitigation Banking provides a financial incentive to property owners to protect forest resources in a perpetual conservation easement. This means that allowing mitigation banks has a positive effect both for the environment and the regulated community. This policy has been in existence for 20 years and requires that banking credits that preserve existing forest be purchased at a 2:1 ratio making it an excellent tool for forest preservation.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or [lgraf@marylandbuilders.org](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee