



BALTIMORE TREE TRUST

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee
Maryland State Senate
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Vice Chair, Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee
Maryland State Senate
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 503 / SB 923 – Greenspace Equity Program - Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment,

On behalf of Baltimore Tree Trust, I would like offer our strong support for HB 503 / SB 923, the proposed “Greenspace Equity Program.”

Baltimore Tree Trust is a grassroots, Black-led organization working to plant thousands of trees across our most vulnerable urban neighborhoods. Since our founding in 2008, we have been guided by a singular vision: that *everyone* deserves access to the benefits provided by good water and air quality. We envision a city made up of tree-lined streets that connect residents to large, leafy parks. Our planting crews are out in the field every day working to make this goal a reality. The Greenspace Equity Program will provide essential funding to move our mission forward.

Green spaces, particularly wooded ones, absorb large amounts of water and heat. In urban centers across Maryland, residents are surrounded by impervious surfaces - such as parking lots, roads, and rooftops - that trap heat and increase flooding. Underrepresented communities of color are disproportionately affected by environmental issues caused by lack of green space. As an organization truly committed to environmental justice, we see high value in funding projects within marginalized communities across the state. ALL Marylanders deserve to reside in cool, healthy neighborhoods that are resilient to the effects of global climate change. HB 503/ SB 923 will have a tangible impact on our communities.

Thank you for considering our testimony in support of **SB 923 - Natural Resources - Greenspace Equity Program – Establishment** (and House Bill 503 as amended). Our organization hopes that you will work to advance and pass this important legislation in the 2023 General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Zoe Gensheimer
Director of Advocacy and Community Engagement