

## American Chestnut Land Trust

*Connecting people with the land*

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February 13, 2023

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 The American Chestnut Land Trust (ACL T), I write to urge your support for the Greenspace Equity Program (HB 503) to advance this bill favorably from committee.

Saving the environment begins with saving the land. With the Biden administration's ambitious goal to preserve 30% of U.S. lands by 2030, and many world leaders pushing for an even more lofty goal of 50% of land preserved, it is now more crucial than ever to protect the earth's remaining natural lands and support efforts to advance these goals. This bill will not only support these goals, but do so in a way that prioritizes environmental justice, and thus it has ACL T's full support.

Although climate change impacts everyone, it does so unequally. Those in underserved communities are disproportionately feeling its effects, and our efforts to address climate change must account for these discrepancies. Due to a history of insufficient investment in these communities, not only have they become uniquely vulnerable to climate change effects such as rising temperatures and more intense storm events, but they have also seen a disproportionate lack of access to nature and green spaces. The Greenspace Equity Program promises to address these inequalities and target resources to underserved communities, providing access to greenspace and curbing the magnitude of climate change effects in these areas.

Although preserving land locally in the Parkers Creek subwatershed of Calvert County, ACL T works with the larger Southern Maryland region by coordinating the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA). The Greenspace Equity Program could potentially help land trusts and other organizations in the Alliance achieve greater land preservation in their respective communities, thus advancing the mission of SMCA to "conserve and restore Southern Maryland's landscapes, waterways, and shorelines that are special to its people, fundamental to its economy, reflected in its culture, and vital for its native fish, wildlife, and plants on which we rely."



American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

A copy of the current ACL T financial statement is available on request. Requests should be directed to the American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 or call (410) 414-3400. For the cost of copies and postage, documents and information submitted under the Business Regulation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland are available from the Secretary of State.

We know what needs to be done to address climate change and reduce its effects for future generations, and we have the tools to do so. The question remains whether or not we use the tools at our disposal to guarantee a livable environment. The Greenspace Equity Program (HB 503) is a necessary step toward ensuring the long-term environmental sustainability for the future of Maryland, and we strongly urge your support.

Sincerely,



Gregory A. Bowen  
ACLT Executive Director