



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

House Bill 289
Maryland Forestry Education Fund - Establishment

Position: Support

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: March 1, 2023

From: Gabrielle Leach

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 289. The bill would establish a special, nonlapsing fund to expand and enhance the Maryland Forestry Foundation's capacity to educate and resource forest landowners, district forestry boards, and local governments on mechanisms to achieve healthy sustainable forests.

Specifically, HB 289 directs the new Maryland Forestry Education Fund be used to drive awareness of and training in:

- Healthy forest management;
- Ecological service markets;
- Emerging forestry threats;
- Climate science;
- Forest conservation;
- Urban forestry;
- Sustainability science;
- Forestry policy;
- Forestry Practices; and
- Resource options that promote the multiple benefits of forest management.

This bill enables further landowner outreach and engagement on long-term forest maintenance and management, which aligns with recommendations from the "Final Plan for Growing 5 Million Trees in Maryland" and the work of the Maryland Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings. Sustained investment could also increase local capacity for practice adoption and drive climate-smart forest management in line with the state's ambitious net zero carbon mitigation goal.

Though MDE is not impacted directly, ongoing coordination with the Department on tree programs and related state engagement on carbon markets and conservation financing is anticipated.

Accordingly, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 289.

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