

The logo is an oval with a yellow background and a black border. Inside the oval, the words "SUSTAINABLE" and "MARYLAND" are written in bold, black, uppercase letters. Below "MARYLAND", the word "CERTIFIED" is written in white, uppercase letters on a red rectangular background.

SUSTAINABLE MARYLAND

CERTIFIED

HELPING COMMUNITIES INVEST TODAY FOR A MORE LIVABLE TOMORROW

Date: February 7, 2025

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Bill: HB 530 – Maryland Forestry Education Fund

Position: Support

RE: Support of HB 530 – extension of the Maryland Forestry Education Fund

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee members,

My name is Mike Hunninghake. I'm the Director of the Sustainable Maryland program at the University of Maryland.

The Sustainable Maryland program strongly supports the extension of the Maryland Forestry Education Fund. The need to expand Forestry Board capacity has significantly grown over the years as the number of people who own forest lands has multiplied and the threats to forest health increase. The Forestry Education Fund provides for better stewardship education and the ongoing capacity to deliver it, at a modest cost, enabling the Maryland Forestry Foundation to help the Forestry Boards and local governments achieve an even greater impact.

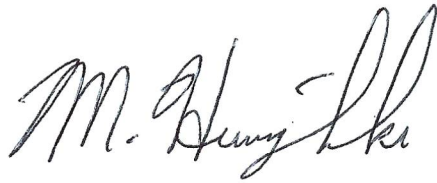
The Sustainable Maryland program has worked directly with Maryland's 157 incorporated municipalities for over 10 years, including in more than half of the state's urbanized towns and cities. Our experience providing technical assistance to these communities suggests that this funding helps increase the number of in-the ground projects at the local level. The Green Teams that we help organize and support, which include council members, public works staff, foresters and local residents, need to know what resources are available to them in terms of technical assistance and funding. The Forestry Education Fund functions as that essential conduit of information.

As a specific example, we have partnered with the Foundation to support the Urban Forestry Careers Camp, held at UMD in College Park, which helps foster young people's interest and

engagement in this field. This program offers high school students an opportunity to experience hands-on learning with industry professionals and experts in many forestry-related fields, and helps create a vital pipeline for the next generation of foresters in the state.

Sustainable Maryland has worked with the Maryland Forestry Foundation for many years, and we look forward to continuing to partner with them on similar projects across the state that are supported by the Forestry Education Fund.

I urge you to vote "Yes" in support HB 530 and the extension of the existing law.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hunninghake".

Mike Hunninghake

Director

Sustainable Maryland

Environmental Finance Center - University of Maryland at College Park

www.sustainablemaryland.com