



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 530

Maryland Forestry Education Fund - Mandatory Funding - Extension

Date: February 12, 2025

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Matt Stegman,
Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 530, which extends the time period during which the Governor will include an annual appropriation for the Maryland Forestry Education Fund. The Maryland Forestry Education Fund was created by legislation passed in 2023 but has not yet been capitalized. This bill recognizes both the importance of this new program and the fiscal realities facing our state by ensuring funding is available for the program in the future.

Much of Maryland's forest land is in the possession of private landowners. The decisions these landowners make can have significant consequences for the environment including water quality protection, fish and wildlife habitat and mitigation of greenhouse gases among others. The Maryland Forestry Education Fund will expand the scope of forest landowner training programs by providing up-to-date information on sustainable forestry practices and ecosystem services.

Landowners, forestry boards, and local governments can integrate this information into forest management plans that protect forest functions while maintaining profitability of the forest resource. CBF especially welcomes education on climate science, forest conservation, and urban forestry as these topics are often missing from traditional forest education programs.

Building local capacity, institutionalizing sustainability, and peer-to-peer education are all tenants of a successful model for regenerative natural resources management. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation continues to support efforts to improve forest stewardship through forestry education via options such as the Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 530.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.