

CONGRESSIONAL
SPORTSMEN'S
FOUNDATION

To: **Hon. Marc Korman**
250 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **House Bill 1560 – Forest Conservation – Incentives – Pilot Program and Fund**

Position: **Support with Amendment**

Date: **3/11/2026**

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and as a lifelong Marylander, I write to express our support for conserving private forestland in our state and to underscore the importance of sustainable forest management to forest resilience and ecological integrity.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Forests provide a wide array of ecosystem services beneficial to the environment and public, including wildlife habitat, clean water, and access for outdoor recreation. House Bill 1560 (HB 1560) rightly recognizes the value of ecosystem services and provides mechanisms to conserve the private forests at risk of conversion to non-forest uses to ensure that nonindustrial private forests will continue to provide these important services to our state.

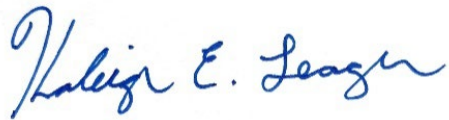
As the General Assembly considers HB 1560, we recommend incorporating science-based active forest management practices that enhance wildlife habitat and improve forest resiliency into the definition of "ecosystem value-oriented forest management" and to provide direction to that effect to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their rulemaking. Wildlife habitat management works hand in glove with sustainable forest management, and maintaining stewardship management flexibility to adapt to the threats that a changing climate poses to Maryland's forests is critical for long-term forest resiliency. Active forest management minimizes threats, like invasive species, that jeopardize biological diversity; creates habitat diversity for wildlife; and enables forests to withstand

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stressors, including insects, disease, drought, and wildfire, to maintain ecological integrity to be able to continue to provide ecosystem services.

In closing, thank you for leading on this issue important to Maryland's sportsmen and women. We look forward to seeing HB 1560 advance to conserve our state's private forests that provide ecosystem services through sustainable forest management. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kaleigh E. Leager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kaleigh Leager
Manager, Mid-Atlantic States
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
kleager@congressionalsportsmen.org

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