



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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## House Bill 1560 Forest Conservation – Incentives – Pilot Program and Fund

**Date:** March 11, 2026

**To:** Environment & Transportation Committee  
Appropriations Committee

**Position:** FAVORABLE

**From:** Matt Stegman,  
MD Staff Attorney

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS House Bill 1560**, which directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish and implement a pilot program for ecosystem value-oriented forest management plans. The program will provide additional financial incentives to landowners who enroll in and extend commitments to forest conservation and management. The bill also establishes the Forest Ecosystem Value Incentives Fund to finance the pilot program and requires a \$10 million FY 2028 appropriation to capitalize the fund.

Forests are one of nature's most powerful tools for keeping our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay clean. However, each year, thousands of acres of land throughout the Bay region are paved over, replacing forests with rooftops, roads, and parking lots. This loss eliminates vital air and water filters, destroys wildlife habitat, and increases pollution flowing into our rivers and the Bay. "Forest fragmentation," a patchwork of suburban and forested areas, is a common sight in communities throughout the watershed. As the Bay struggles to meet water quality goals, planting and protecting trees remains one of the most successful and cost-effective solutions

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 1560.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto: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.*