



House Bill 1314 Natural Resources – Chesapeake Bay Trust – Urban Trees Program Written Testimony

Date: March 6th, 2026

Support

Submitted to: Environment and Transportation Committee

Submitted by: Kacey Wetzel, Vice President, Outreach and Education, Chesapeake Bay Trust

Background

The Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 created the Urban Trees Program to provide resources, including funding and technical assistance, to underserved urban communities to plant trees and expand tree canopy. The Act mandates an appropriation of \$10 million annually for nine fiscal years, through FY2031. The Chesapeake Bay Trust was selected to administer this program based on its long track record of efficiently funding community greening and urban forestry work.



Urban trees and green spaces produce a wide array of public benefits: improved air quality, heat island mitigation, stormwater absorption, carbon sequestration, community livability, improved public health outcomes, and strengthened local business districts. These benefits are particularly important in neighborhoods that historically lack green infrastructure and face disproportionate environmental burdens. This bill would remove the nine-year funding sunset and make the funding permanent.

Why Permanent Funding

While forests can regenerate on their own, street trees do not. Urban canopy, especially in disinvested communities, is a managed public asset that requires proactive planting and long-term maintenance. Without predictable investment, canopy declines, and the health, climate, and economic benefits envisioned by the legislature fail to materialize.

When the program was created, the statewide goal of 500,000 urban trees was appropriately ambitious. However, the original combination of budget and timeframe was never sufficient to fully meet that goal, because urban trees do not cost \$180 per tree as early estimates assumed. In reality, a single urban tree pit can cost \$500 for the pit alone, not including the tree itself, soil amendments, labor, or multi-year establishment care. Urban tree planting carries higher costs because it requires construction, specialized labor, and site-specific engineering in densely built environments.

Removal of the current 2031 sunset creates three benefits:

1. The 500,000-tree goal will be able to be met.
2. Residents can feel confident that resources exist to sustain long-term maintenance costs.
3. The sector can invest in nursery stocks, contracting capacity, and workforce development needed to lower costs with confidence in a stable future market.

With ongoing funding, nurseries, nonprofits, and planting contractors would have the confidence to invest in growing the supply chain, leading to economies of scale that move the true cost of an urban tree closer to the aspirational \$180 target. A predictable market would reduce per-tree costs over time and allow Maryland to build the long-term workforce and nursery capacity required for sustained canopy expansion.

Maintenance Is Essential to Protecting the State’s Investment

Planting often receives capital funding, but maintenance rarely does. As a result, the long-term costs of pruning, watering, pest management, and structural care often fall to communities least able to absorb them, undermining the equity intent of the program. In underserved neighborhoods in particular, lack of maintenance can lead to:

- avoidable decline or loss of young trees,
- premature mortality requiring costly replacement,
- public safety concerns from failing limbs, and
- blight that erodes community trust and momentum.

A durable funding mechanism would enable communities to maintain the canopy the state has invested in, ensuring that plantings reach maturity and deliver the full ecological and public health benefits the program was designed to provide. This approach honors the spirit of the original Act: sustained, equitable canopy benefits in the communities that need them most.



Program Performance to Date

In the first four years of the program (FY23–26), the Trust received more than \$47 million in requests and awarded more than \$34 million via 156 awards, resulting in over 84,000 trees planted across Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Talbot, Washington, and Wicomico Counties. Demand continues to significantly exceed available resources.

The program has also spurred investments in biologically diverse nursery stock and supported more than 1,500 jobs among nonprofit grantees, planting contractors, and nursery operations, building exactly the type of green workforce Maryland aims to expand.

Current Grant Cycle and Funding Need

The Request for Proposals for the next Urban Trees funding round is currently open, with applications due in early March. Proposal review will occur in April, with a recommended slate of FY27 grantees prepared in May and notified July 1, timed for fall planting, which ensures higher tree survivorship.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1985 to empower community-based groups to take part in restoring and protecting the state’s natural resources. As a nonprofit grant-maker, the Trust complements state agency work by supporting schools, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, homeowners associations, civic groups, and other local partners. Known for its efficiency, the Trust invests more than 90 cents of every dollar directly into programs and has awarded nearly \$200 million through 13,000 grants across every Maryland county.

The Trust does not receive a direct state appropriation for its operations. Instead, it is funded through the Chesapeake Bay license plate program; the Chesapeake and Endangered Species Fund tax checkoff; donation options in Maryland’s online licensing system; and partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, foundations, corporations, and individual donors. The Trust has earned Charity Navigator’s highest four-star rating for more than two decades, placing it among the top 1% of nonprofits nationally. A core tenet of its strategic plan is engaging under-engaged communities in natural resource issues.

More information about the Urban Trees Program can be found at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/urban-trees/>. Previous grantees, as an example of the types of groups who will be identified in May to receive the new FY27 funding, can be found in Attachment 1 and letters of support from current grantees can be found in Attachment 2.

**Attachment 1: FY23-26 Urban Trees Program Grantees
Chesapeake Bay Trust**

| Awardees | Award Amount |
|--|---------------------|
| 3200 Carlisle Block Association, Inc. | \$ 10,409.00 |
| 755 Alliance Inc. | \$ 41,700.00 |
| Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay | \$ 831,210.00 |
| Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Theta Nu Chapter | \$ 954.40 |
| Anne Arundel Watershed Stewards Academy | \$ 54,851.00 |
| Antietam Creek Watershed Alliance (ACWA) | \$ 89,754.00 |
| Ashburton Area Association | \$ 29,193.00 |
| Backyard Basecamp, Inc. | \$ 13,490.00 |
| Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection & Sustainability | \$ 2,890,001.00 |
| Baltimore Tree Trust | \$ 8,045,002.00 |
| Blue Water Baltimore | \$ 1,337,362.00 |
| Boys & Girls Club of Southern Maryland | \$ 1,955.00 |
| Broadway East Community Development Corporation | \$ 429,472.00 |
| Carole Highland Neighborhood Association | \$ 48,750.00 |
| Casey Trees | \$ 940,991.00 |
| Catonsville Rails to Trails | \$ 15,000.00 |
| Central Kenilworth Ave. Revitalization CDC, Inc. | \$ 193,713.00 |
| Chartley Homeowners Association, Inc. | \$ 20,000.00 |
| City Center Residents Association | \$ 15,000.00 |
| City of Bowie | \$ 1,200.00 |
| City of Brunswick | \$ 26,100.00 |
| City of Frederick | \$ 494,500.00 |
| City of Gaithersburg | \$ 192,877.00 |
| City of Hagerstown | \$ 176,619.00 |
| City of New Carrollton | \$ 51,875.00 |
| City of Rockville, Department of Recreation and Parks | \$ 381,650.00 |
| City of Salisbury | \$ 148,267.00 |
| Community College of Baltimore County | \$ 37,784.00 |
| Cultivating Community | \$ 5,000.00 |
| Defensores de la Cuenca | \$ 1,086,695.00 |
| Delaware Maryland Synod ELCA | \$ 4,859.00 |
| Druid Heights Community Development Corporation | \$ 40,980.00 |
| Eastern Community Church | \$ 82,100.00 |
| Ecotone Inc | \$ 65,000.00 |
| Filbert Street Garden | \$ 7,561.00 |
| First Baptist Church of Highland Park | \$ 4,725.00 |
| Franklin Square Community Association | \$ 9,490.00 |
| Fusion Partnership, Inc., c/o Baltimore Gift Economy | \$ 62,179.00 |
| Global Health and Education Projects, Inc. | \$ 709,662.00 |
| Grace Foundation | \$ 43,553.00 |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Greater Baybrook Alliance | \$ 92,695.00 |
| Greater Remington Improvement Association | \$ 368,000.00 |
| Green Landing Nursery, LLC | \$ 175,110.00 |
| GreenTrust Alliance Inc. | \$ 25,600.00 |
| Gunpowder Valley Conservancy | \$ 14,963.00 |
| Hampstead Tree Commission | \$ 2,908.00 |
| Harford County DPW | \$ 237,845.00 |
| Howard County Government | \$ 145,885.00 |
| Howard EcoWorks, Inc. | \$ 279,657.00 |
| Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) | \$ 451,254.00 |
| Joe's Movement Emporium/World Arts Focus | \$ 592,333.00 |
| Let's Thrive Baltimore Inc. | \$ 45,000.00 |
| Lillie May Carroll Jackson School | \$ 18,500.00 |
| Live Peace Tech Corporation | \$ 96,403.00 |
| Lower Shore Land Trust | \$ 3,300.00 |
| Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission | \$ 673,560.00 |
| MedStar Harbor Hospital | \$ 29,000.00 |
| Midtown Community Benefits District | \$ 323,592.00 |
| Montgomery County Department Of Transportation | \$ 362,740.00 |
| Montgomery County Maryland Department of Environmental Protection | \$ 949,680.00 |
| Montgomery County, Maryland | \$ 1,383,244.00 |
| Morgan State University Foundation, Inc. | \$ 19,561.00 |
| National Audubon Society, Inc. (dba Audubon Mid-Atlantic) | \$ 200,000.00 |
| NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, Inc. | \$ 8,594.00 |
| North Avenue and Hilton Street Business and Community Task Force | \$ 5,000.00 |
| Notre Dame of Maryland University | \$ 76,796.00 |
| Parks & People Foundation | \$ 899,415.00 |
| Patapsco Heritage Greenway, Inc. | \$ 9,934.00 |
| Piscataway Hills Citizens Association (PHCA) | \$ 3,454.00 |
| Preservation Trust of Wicomico, Inc | \$ 15,000.00 |
| Prince George's County, Maryland | \$ 1,300,000.00 |
| Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation | \$ 3,926,667.00 |
| Quail Valley Homeowners Association | \$ 4,579.00 |
| Resilience Authority of Charles County | \$ 79,822.00 |
| Rev Samuel Green Sr Foundation | \$ 30,500.00 |
| Schott Nursery LLC | \$ 267,013.00 |
| Seton Hill Association, Inc. | \$ 99,660.00 |
| Shady Grove Village HOA | \$ 5,000.00 |
| ShoreRivers | \$ 758,947.00 |
| South West Community Council Incorporated dba Citizens of Pigtown | \$ 28,263.00 |
| Takoma Park Mobilization | \$ 16,740.00 |
| Temple X Schools LLC | \$ 9,831.00 |
| The 6th Branch | \$ 316,928.00 |

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| The Black Landscapers Alliance | \$ 60,796.00 |
| The Community Ecology Institute | \$ 3,016.00 |
| The Eastpines Citizens Association Inc | \$ 5,000.00 |
| The New Greenmount West Community Association, Inc. | \$ 51,900.00 |
| The Urban Oasis | \$ 17,720.00 |
| Town of Berwyn Heights | \$ 10,000.00 |
| Town of Cheverly | \$ 25,346.00 |
| Town of Cottage City | \$ 22,555.00 |
| Town of Delmar | \$ 10,000.00 |
| Town of Riverdale Park | \$ 41,875.00 |
| Unity Properties, Inc. | \$ 22,700.00 |
| University of Maryland Medical System | \$ 59,098.00 |
| University of Maryland, Baltimore | \$ 39,289.00 |
| University of Maryland, Baltimore County | \$ 329,916.00 |
| Upton Westside CDC | \$ 387,115.00 |
| Vestry Salisbury Parish - Parsons Cemetery | \$ 6,300.00 |
| Waldorf School of Baltimore | \$ 30,855.00 |
| Waverly Main Street | \$ 3,153.00 |
| York Corridor Business Improvement District Management Authority, Inc. | \$ 19,782.00 |
| Total | \$34,140,872.40 |



KATHERINE A. KLAUSMEIER
County Executive

HORACIO TABLADA, *Director*
Department of Environmental Protection
and Sustainability

Dear Members of the Committee on Environment and Transportation,

My name is Saul Passe, and I serve as the Supervisor of the Urban Reforestation Division of Baltimore County. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1314, which would extend funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust to provide grants for urban tree planting projects.

Over the past five years, the grants our department has received through the Chesapeake Bay Trust have been extremely instrumental in funding our urban tree planting initiatives. We have successfully planted 3,894 trees through our programs, Operation ReTree and Project ReTree, which focus on increasing the tree canopy in underserved areas throughout Baltimore County. These plantings not only enhance neighborhood aesthetics but also improve air quality, reduce urban heat island effects, manage stormwater runoff, and contribute to the overall health and resilience of our local environment.

The funding provided through HB 1314 is essential to sustaining the long-term success of Baltimore County's urban tree planting programs. Urban forestry initiatives require consistent investment to ensure proper planning, planting, maintenance, and community engagement. Without continued grant support, our ability to expand and maintain the tree canopy will be significantly constrained.

Extending this funding will allow local governments like ours to continue delivering environmental, public health, and economic benefits to residents while supporting broader Chesapeake Bay restoration goals.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully urge your support of HB 1314 to continue the valuable work done by The Chesapeake Bay Trust in our urban communities.

Sincerely,

Saul Passe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Saul Passe", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Supervisor – Urban Reforestation

Baltimore County Environmental Protection and Sustainability



02 March 2026

Maryland General Assembly
250/251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of the Baltimore Tree Trust (BTT), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 1314 and to urge the Maryland General Assembly's Environment and Transportation Committee to make a long-term investment in the program.

The Maryland General Assembly established the Urban Trees Award Program (UTAP) through the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, and it represents a vital investment in addressing the pressing challenges of climate change and environmental inequities across the state. The Tree Solutions Now Act was enacted to plant five million native trees over ten years, with annual appropriations managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust specifically for the UTAP.

This program emphasizes planting 10% of the trees, a total of 500,000, in underserved urban communities, ensuring areas disproportionately affected by environmental challenges, such as the urban heat island effect, benefit directly. Over the past four years, the Chesapeake Bay Trust has showcased the transformative impact of its funding by supporting 147 community-led projects by investing \$34.4 million to plant 92,377 new native trees in areas where greenery and resources are scarce. Permanent funding provided by HB1314 will provide longterm investments in essential green infrastructure to urban areas that will mitigate the impacts of climate change.

With funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, BTT has planted over 9,500 native trees in Baltimore City through its UTAP, contributing to more than 22,000 trees planted since its founding in 2008. This achievement reflects BTT's strong partnerships with neighborhood stakeholders and its proven ability to execute large-scale urban greening initiatives. HB1314 would provide the stable, long-term funding necessary for BTT and similar organizations to plan with confidence. This funding would allow them to move beyond project-by-project uncertainty and develop comprehensive, multi-year strategies to address Baltimore's most pressing environmental challenges.

In addition, permanent funding would offer significant economic benefits. It would enable BTT to grow its workforce and create and sustain quality green jobs for Baltimore residents, including positions in environmental education, community outreach, crew leadership, and urban forestry. The local economy would also benefit, as sustained funding would increase BTT's reliance on local nurseries and suppliers for tools, trees, mulch, and landscaping materials. This investment would enhance local procurement and strengthen the environmental supply chain throughout Maryland. In summary, HB1314 represents an investment that not only promotes environmental stewardship but also fosters a resilient local economy.

The HB1314 will provide direct benefits to your constituents across Maryland, such as:

- **Cooling and Lower Energy Bills:** Trees combat the urban heat island effect, providing natural cooling that reduces air-conditioning use and lowers energy costs, especially for low-income residents.
- **Flood Prevention (Stormwater Management):** Trees absorb stormwater, acting as green infrastructure to protect communities and systems from costly and dangerous flash flooding, which is worsened by high percentages of impervious surfaces like concrete, often hitting underserved neighborhoods hardest.
- **Health and Pollution Reduction:** Trees filter pollutants like particulate matter and ozone, improving public health and addressing elevated rates of respiratory illness in environmentally inequitable communities.
- **Economic Development and Property Values:** Trees increase property values, strengthen the tax base, and attract investment—making canopy growth an economic strategy for urban areas like Baltimore.
- **Creates and Sustains Jobs in Forestry:** From tree-planting crews and arborists to project coordinators and environmental educators, Maryland’s long-term tree canopy and environmental goals are creating meaningful employment pathways in underserved communities and a skilled local workforce to maintain the canopy and further tree canopy gains.

HB1314 is a crucial opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the state's tree canopy goals, make long-term investments in our environment, and support the communities that rely on this program, particularly Baltimore City. We strongly urge the Maryland General Assembly’s Environment and Transportation Committee to pass HB1314 and ensure continued funding for this essential program.

Sincerely,



Bryant Smith
Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore Tree Trust





March 2, 2026

Maryland General Assembly
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: ***Support for HB1314***

Dear Committee Members,

Howard EcoWorks (EcoWorks) is nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower communities and diverse workforces to conserve and restore our natural systems for future generations. We engage and educate the community about environmental sustainability and restoration, while creating pathways to green jobs through our workforce development programs. We educate and train individuals on best management practices to improve our local natural resources, build environmental stewardship, and provide them with job skills and employment opportunities. We design attractive and resilient landscapes with plants and trees native to the local environment, by removing invasive species and enhancing habitats to benefit pollinators and local wildlife. We focus on waterway debris management and stormwater best practices to protect vulnerable areas from flooding and storm-water run-off.

As the Founder and Executive Director of this change-making organization, I write to express EcoWorks' strong support for HB 1314 and its importance to our organization, the communities that we serve and urban and underserved areas throughout the region. EcoWorks is a long-standing grant recipient of the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) including the Urban Trees program. EcoWorks was an inaugural recipient of the Urban Trees grant program in 2022 and successfully planted 500 trees in urban underserved communities through the leadership and hard work of our green job program trainees. EcoWorks received two more subsequent grants in 2023 and 2025, each to plant an additional 500 trees in urban and underserved communities. The Urban Trees Grant Award Program has given our organization the capacity and the funds to support vulnerable communities that have faced historical disenfranchisement with an opportunity to green their communities with native trees. The impact of the funds are amplified by supporting green infrastructure job opportunities for young adults in our Restoring Environment and Developing Youth program and under- and unemployed individuals in our UpLift program. As a partner of MD's tremendous Service Year program and hosting 10 MD Corps members in 2025/2026, we also value the ability to leverage these resources to further enhance our training programs while giving back to our local communities. Lastly, we value the Trust's commitment to maintenance of the tree plantings through the Urban Trees Award Program – as an organization that



implements green infrastructure projects on the daily, we have a firm understanding of the importance of maintenance for these types of projects.

I respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee support HB1314. Programs such as this have value well beyond the trees that go in the ground as evidence by the scores of program participants in my organization that have gained valuable skills, certificates and certifications that have supported their career pathways. Permanent funding of the Urban Trees Program allows organizations like mine to build capacity for sustained engagement in underserved communities. In addition, this annual funding supports our ability to continue expanding geographically and in new communities. Having a reliable source of funds for tree planting provides us with stability to implement our workforce and community programming. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding our support of HB1314.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori Lilly', written in a cursive style.

Lori Lilly
Founder and Executive Director



ONE ORGANIZATION, TWO GREAT VENUES.

JOE'S MOVEMENT EMPORIUM

3309 Bunker Hill Rd
Mount Rainier, MD 20712
P:301.699.1819
www.joesmovement.org

CREATIVE SUITLAND ARTS CENTER

4719 Silver Hill Rd
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www.creativesuitland.org

March 3, 2026

To whom it may concern,

Joe's Movement Emporium supports the passage of Maryland House Bill 1314, making permanent the Urban Tree Grant program managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. We established our environmental program GreenWorks as an urban forestry leader in Prince George's County through this grant program. As of May 2026, Green will have planted over 1600 trees in Prince George's County over four years from 2023 – 2026. We have trained 10 young adults in urban forestry practices, provide full-time employment currently to 5 staff and support partners in 11 municipalities in PG County. The Urban Tree Grant was the first tree planting grant we ever were awarded, and it has sustained our growth and allowed us to meet the demand of our community to provide them with the ecosystem services they demand and deserve.

GreenWorks works entirely within the Anacostia River watershed in Prince George's County, MD. All the communities we serve; Capitol Heights, Langley Park, District Heights, Seat Pleasant, Cottage City, Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Mt. Rainier and others are environmental justice communities; majority non-white and lower income. PG county has the highest rate of deforestation of any county in Maryland, as well as chronic disinvestment in green infrastructure when compared to wealthier areas in the DMV like Montgomery County and northern Virginia. In these EJ communities, GreenWorks provides free tree planting services, native plant gardens, invasive vine plant removal, trash cleanup, environmental education events and volunteer workdays to support each town's individual sustainability goals. Examples of projects we've done include: planting and watering 150 trees for a municipality along residential right-of-ways, working with the town green teams to organize an at-home tree planting program, and designing and planting a food forest for the Langley Park civic association. We try to meet municipalities, non-profits, homeowners, and other community stakeholders where they are with the programs we offer.

We could not do this without the Urban Tree Grant managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. It is the funding that still after four years we build our entire program around. Without this funding we would not be able to maintain the staffing and programmatic excellence our partners deserve.

Sincerely,

Aster Sanders
Joe's Movement Emporium GreenWorks Program Director



Resilience Authority

of Charles County, Maryland, Inc.

March 3, 2026

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB1314

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I write to express the Resilience Authority of Charles County, Inc.'s strong support for permanent funding of the Urban Trees Award Program and to relay the impact it has and will continue to have in serving overburdened and underserved communities in Charles County, Maryland. This program, established by the Maryland General Assembly through the *Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021*, represents a vital investment in addressing the pressing challenges of climate change and environmental inequities across the state.

The Tree Solutions Now Act was enacted to plant five million native trees over ten years, with a \$10 million annual appropriation to be managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) specifically for the Urban Trees Program. This initiative emphasizes planting 10% of the trees – 500,000 – in urban underserved communities, ensuring that areas disproportionately affected by environmental challenges, such as the urban heat island effect, benefit directly.

The Resilience Authority of Charles County is a nonprofit organization that, as a government instrumentality, is operated for the public purpose of responding to the impacts of climate change in communities across Charles County, Maryland. Recognizing that the risks of climate change are not shared equally, the Resilience Authority prioritizes equity-based projects that enhance the resilience of vulnerable and underserved communities, with nature-based solutions that have multiple co-benefits. In doing so, the Resilience Authority seeks to turn climate challenges into opportunities to create more equitable and environmentally sustainable communities.

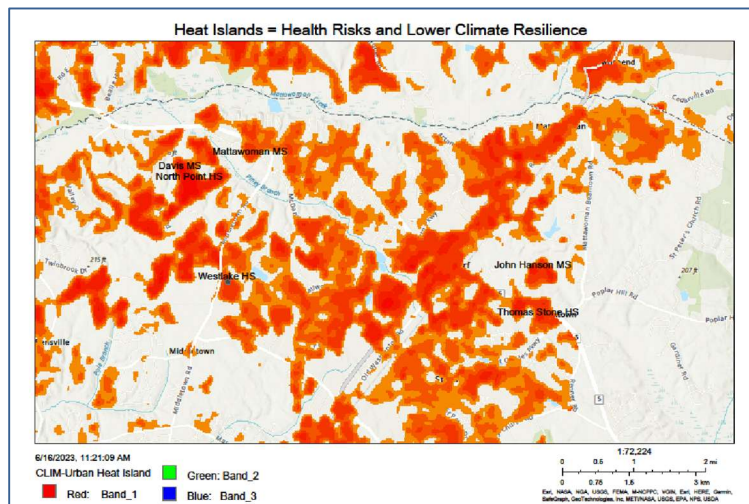
The CBT Urban Trees Award Program grant to the CC Resilience Authority has served as the foundation for transformative impacts at Charles County Public Schools:

1. **Youth-Led Tree Equity:** Since 2023, during fall and spring planting seasons, **over 400 Charles County Public School students** have planted native trees at their own schools during class time with the Charles County Public School Environmental Educators, the CC Resilience Authority and Maryland Forest Service.

Photos of students planting native trees on their school grounds:



2. **As a result of this Youth-led Tree Equity effort, over 600 native trees have been planted at Charles County Public Schools that are in identified Urban Heat Islands and that serve overburdened communities in Charles County.** Please see heat mapping below that informed tree planting efforts at Charles County Public School sites:



- ✓ Thomas Stone High School
- ✓ Westlake High School
- ✓ North Point High School
- ✓ Stethem Educational Center
- ✓ CCBOE Demonstration Site
- ✓ Craik Elementary School
- ✓ Mattawoman Middle School
- ✓ Davis Middle School
- ✓ John Hanson Middle School

3. **Workforce Development and Paid Green Jobs:** The CBT Urban Tree grant has served as the foundation for what has become three years of the Resilience Authority Youth Corps in Charles County. The Resilience Authority Youth Corps (RAYC) is hosted by the Student Conservation Association (SCA), and thus far, 38 youth and young adults have served over 6,800 hours, planted and maintained over 600 trees, engaged in multiple community events, and established urban green infrastructure in underserved Charles County communities through all four seasons.



Resilience Authority *of Charles County, Maryland, Inc.*



"Hello, my name is Kennadi Sanders. I am beyond grateful to have received the opportunity to build my county's environment for the better. This organization helped improve my social skills greatly by working with people my age who hold the same values as me and gave me a very open community. There have been days where watering was difficult, but while it was hard, I laughed greatly while doing it. This being one of the hottest summers in Maryland, made me strive to maintain and protect the trees. One thing you wouldn't expect is for us to grow so much stronger as a crew and family offering water or helping crew members when overheated or upset. All of the personal growth I obtained during this program could not have happened without the SCA and partners. I couldn't be more thankful. Never in my life have I experienced these things before SCA offered them to me. A new world has been opened and as a Charles County resident, I hope my younger siblings will be able to see our inspiration and educate them on the importance of trees. I plan on rejoining crews in later winter and summer crews because seeing the impact on making it so rewarding. Thank you SCA."

- Kennadi Sanders

The Urban Trees Program is much more than a tree-planting effort. It is a vehicle for achieving measurable improvements in public health, environmental resilience, and engaging our youth as demonstrated above. Expanding tree canopy in underserved urban areas improves air quality, reduces temperatures, and mitigates the effects of climate change. These benefits have a direct, positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of residents, particularly those in historically disinvested communities.



Resilience Authority

of Charles County, Maryland, Inc.

We strongly support permanent funding of the Urban Tree program, which is a sound and crucial investment in Maryland's future. CBT's proven ability to engage diverse stakeholders, build community capacity, and achieve tangible results makes it the ideal steward of this Program.

Through permanent funding of the Urban Trees Award Program, Maryland will continue to make significant strides in fulfilling its commitment to equity and sustainability and continue to improve climate adaptation and public health outcomes.

We would be happy to provide additional information or meet to discuss the importance of this program further. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy J. Schaefer

Stacy J. Schaefer
Executive Director

Schaefes@resilientcharlescountymd.com

443-603-5742 mobile



Resilience Authority

of Charles County, Maryland, Inc.