



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 1314**

**DATE: March 6, 2026**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Ivey**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Garrett Fitzgerald (garrett.fitzgerald@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: Support (Department of Environmental Protection)**

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### **Natural Resources - Chesapeake Bay Trust - Urban Trees Program**

House Bill 1314 will extend an existing appropriation and codify the Urban Trees Grant Program administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. This successful program plays a critical role in helping to equitably achieve Maryland's no-net-loss tree canopy goals by supporting the establishment of shade trees in urban underserved areas. These investments provide a wide array of highly valued environmental, social, and financial benefits for Marylanders.

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has deployed funds received through this program to plant trees in underserved urban communities through the County's Tree Montgomery Shade Tree Planting Program. Over the last four years, DEP has planted and provided aftercare for more than 4,450 shade trees, with a 94 percent survival rate, at residential properties, public schools, and community and health centers.

It is important to make these changes now due to the lead time needed to grow suitable trees for planting. Most shade trees are 4- to 7-years old when they are planted in urban areas. Without a dedicated funding source to sustain this program beyond 2031, the supply of trees will decline, costs will increase, and fewer trees will be planted in underserved urban areas. By solidifying the State's commitment to this valuable program now, this bill will help to avoid disruptions that would reduce the program's effectiveness if the decision to make the program permanent were to be delayed. This added certainty would also support economic development in industries such as nurseries and those who plant and care for trees.

We respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 1314.