



July 6, 2020

The Honorable Frederick County Council
Winchester Hall
12 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

Re: Support for Council Bills 20-08 and 20-07

Dear President Keegan-Ayer and Council Members,

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Frederick County is a coalition of local and state organizations representing approximately 16,000 members and supporters in Frederick County. We engage residents and policy makers in support of wise land use that values our rural landscapes, protects our natural resources, and enhances the unique character of our towns and cities to ensure a more resilient and prosperous future.

We are writing today in support of Council Bills 20-08 and 20-07 introduced by Council Members Kai Hagen and Steve McKay, on behalf of County Executive Jan Gardner. With increasing development pressure facing Frederick County, we believe that increasing forest protections is imperative for the health and well-being of county residents and the environment in which they live.

Council Bill 20-08 proposes updating the existing forest conservation ordinance to ensure that developers replace every acre of forest they cut down by replanting the same amount of acres elsewhere. This bill also ensures compliance with the state Forest Conservation Act because it uses the standard state minimum 'standard calculation' in the rare cases where this complex formula would restore more forests. The proposal retains the 2-to-1 replanting to cut ratios for projects that remove more forest than allowed under the existing conservation thresholds. If approved, this no net forest loss legislation would restore Frederick County's position as a leader in forest conservation in the face of intense development pressure. Additionally, Council Bill 20-07 would amend Frederick County's zoning process to ensure priority forests and other sensitive environmental features are protected from intense uses when properties are developed.

Investing in our forests provides our children and grandchildren, the future of Frederick County, with cleaner air, land, and water. Forests absorb carbon dioxide, increase soil health, prevent flooding,

*Audubon MD-DC • Audubon Society of Central Maryland
Citizens for the Preservation of Middletown Valley • Cleanwater Linganore • Clean Water Action
Coalition for Smarter Growth • Envision Frederick County • Frederick Zero Waste Alliance • Friends of Frederick County
Healthy Soils Frederick • Maryland League of Conservation Voters • Maryland Native Plant Society
Montgomery Countryside Alliance • Multi-Faith Alliance of Climate Stewards (MACS) of Frederick County
Potomac Conservancy • Potomac Riverkeeper Network • Preservation Maryland
Residents Advocating for Land Use and the Environment (RALE) • Sierra Club Catoclin Group*

provide habitat to animals, and filter water. The undersigned organizations respectfully request your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Elly Colmers Cowan
Acting Director, Smart Growth Maryland
Director of Advocacy, Preservation Maryland

Morgan Lakey
President
Audubon Society of Central Maryland

Ben Alexandro
Water Program Director
Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Anna Mudd
Maryland Outreach and Advocacy Manager
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Emmalee Aman
Policy Director
Potomac Conservancy

Karen Russell
Founder
Climate Change Working Group

Beth Decker
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Safe Skies Maryland

Betsy Smith
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Kirsten Johnson
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Founder, Healthy Soils Frederick
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Jennifer Kunze
Maryland Program Organizer
Clean Water Action

Paul Walker
Chairman
Sierra Club Catoctin Group

cc: Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner
Steve Horn, Frederick County Planning Director