

Montgomery County Council

Rockville, MD

Re: Bill 25-22, Forest Conversation – Trees

Good afternoon distinguished members of the Council,

I appreciate your attention to the reforestation and conservation of Montgomery County. It might seem comical to have an agenda item focused on “trees,” but ultimately as you know, it’s not really about the trees. It is about the health and wellbeing of our county and its citizens, and most importantly, our safety and security due to more severe changing climate.

The majority of Montgomery Council used to be heavily forested. Forested areas were cleared bit by bit for agriculture, timber use, and development, and more recently, the emerald ash borer took an additional toll on forests throughout our region.

Forests and forest ecosystems not only clean and filter our air and water, and they protect against severe storms and events such as flooding. Trees and forested areas act as buffers between major flood prone areas and homes and infrastructure. The county’s proactive investment in ensuring forestation and adequate drainage in commercial and urban areas will return year after year to the county and the citizens in cost savings from severe storms, emergency services, damaged infrastructure, and loss to life.

**I hope the Council votes yes on Bill 25-22.**

I believe several portions of this bill will directly contribute to ensuring and maintaining the safety and security of our county and mitigating climate change. Particularly, planting forest in all unforested stream valley buffers, and ensuring ongoing maintenance of these areas, will help protect against extreme weather events now and in the future, protect critical wildlife (I’m a particular fan of the birds of prey that keep down our mice and rat population!), and filter the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Reforestation is only one part of climate change mitigation. However, it’s a nice dose of preventative medicine.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Vanessa Lamers

Silver Spring, MD

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