

Maryland Priority Legislation



CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

For a third consecutive year, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation is advocating for legislation that will strengthen and improve Maryland's forest protections across several laws, including the Forest Conservation Act (FCA). We will be supporting three different bills that address concerns related to forest loss.

1 Forest Conservation Task Force

Maryland needs an in-depth Task Force on forest loss to quantify and address future deforestation and make recommendations to prevent forest loss without overly disrupting growth and development. The Task Force legislation would include a diverse group of stakeholders and would create recommendations for improving forest outcomes, including offsetting or avoiding loss and improving maintenance for healthy forests.



2 Forest Conservation Fee-in-Lieu

The Forest Conservation Act allows local government to collect a fee in lieu of the developer's reforestation responsibilities. However, it has become clear that there are major problems with this program. Local governments are not required to replant the same amount of forest that the developer would have had to plant and are having problems spending the money collected due to lack of resources or land. This results in much less forest mitigation than is required under the law. The proposed legislation would require local government to mitigate the same amount of forest that a developer would have had to mitigate and increase transparency around fee-in-lieu programs.

3 No Net Loss of Forests

CBF is supporting legislation that would correct the definition of "no net loss of forest" to reflect current conditions of 40 percent of the state covered by forest land. This bill would change the definition from "40 percent of the state covered in tree canopy" to "40 percent of the state covered in forest land" to reflect the actual forest coverage at the time the policy was enacted. (Tree canopy reflects individual trees in otherwise urbanized areas, such as street trees. Forests reflect a full ecological system that supports healthy soils and habitat.)

For more information, please contact Elaine Lutz at 443-482-2165.

Founded in 1967, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) conservation organization dedicated to saving a national treasure—the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and streams. Its motto, Save the Bay, defines the organization's mission and commitment. With headquarters in Annapolis, MD, offices in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, and 17 field centers, CBF works throughout the Chesapeake Bay's 64,000-square-mile watershed to build an informed citizenry, advocate pollution-reduction strategy, and enforce the law. CBF is supported by more than 200,000 active members and has a staff of 170 full-time employees. Approximately 80 percent of CBF's \$23.6 million annual budget is privately raised.

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