



TESTIMONY TO THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COUNCIL

RE: Bill 68-19: AN ORDINANCE concerning Subdivision and Development-Forest Conservation

POSITION: Support

DATE: November 4, 2019

BY: Susan Cochran, Action Chair

What kind of environment, in AA County, do we want for our children and grandchildren? We want clean air and water, less destructive storm water runoff, more cooling and sufficient rain, habitat for plants and animals. Through careful planning that includes conserving trees and forest land, we can make progress to having this kind of environment.

The forest conservation bill submitted on October 7 aimed for that progress. Please strengthen this bill by reconsidering the amendments passed on October 21. To name a few measures: Raise the thresholds for conservation, improve protection for FIDS* by going back to the 50 acre minimum and dropping the requirement that the area be a documented breeding area, tighten up the exemption to confine it to priority funding areas, return essentially to the original grandfathering requirement, raise the fee-in lieu to make a real market for a tree bank, protect the greenways. Make this bill something that makes a really big difference for our future in Anne Arundel County. Thank you for your continued diligent work on this bill.

*Forest Interior Dwelling Species

Note: The measures mentioned were strengthened but for the grandfathering provision. The 100 acre minimum for protection of FIDS was improved to 75 acres. The fee-in-lieu levels were partially restored. A penalty for cutting down trees contrary to law was instituted. Specimen trees were not subject by law to consideration of their condition--the phrase "in fair or better condition" was removed since it was not in state law. Thresholds were not improved, 5% increase on the whole was made in the thresholds. It is hoped that in a couple of years this bill can be revisited for greater protection.

LWVMD advocates are working to get a stronger State Forest Conservation Act, which will force more protection for our County. To find out more, let me know and I will send you detailed analysis provided by Ben Alexandro, Maryland League of Conservation Voters (MDLCV).