



TESTIMONY TO THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COUNCIL

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

POSITION: Support

DATE: October 7, 2019

BY: Alfa Stevens, President

Our County has the opportunity, with the passage of Bill 68-19, to greatly increase the conservation of our forested land.

Forests provide many significant benefits and the conservation of them is imperative. Forests mitigate the effects of a changing climate and help protect waterways. They improve air and water quality, absorb carbon dioxide, provide habitat for native wildlife, create stream and non-tidal wetland buffers, reduce flooding and stormwater runoff, lower temperatures of streams and urban areas. Like the water that surrounds us, forests are a distinguishing characteristic of our county's natural beauty.

As proposed, Bill 68-19 will greatly increase the conservation of our forested land and give greater protection to those areas designated as priority forests. We strongly support the passage of this bill.

Before taking a stance on any public policy, League of Women Voters members study the pros and cons of an issue and come to a consensus. Concerned about the loss of farm and forest land to residential sprawl, the League did a study of the State's existing and potential role in growth management. Through this process the League adopted a position on resource management that calls for government policies that promote conservation of natural resources and requires beneficiaries to pay the costs for land development projects.

We should all be better stewards of our natural resources and do all we can to preserve what remains of the County's forests. We strongly support Bill 68-19, without weakening amendments, and respectfully urge the County Council to pass this bill.