



BALTIMORE CITY FORESTRY BOARD

January 18, 2024

Dear Councilmember McCray and Committee Members,

We wholeheartedly support Bill 23-0465 and 23-0456 as written and encourage their prompt inclusion into Baltimore City Code.

The Baltimore City Forestry Board, created by the Maryland State Legislature, was formed to protect and enhance city trees and forest parklands, encourage and educate the public on the benefits of our tree canopy, and to engage our children through such programs as Arbor Day, Earth Day, and Maryland's Natural Resources Career Camp.

As retired City Arborist for Baltimore, I remain proud of the City's efforts to mitigate tree loss caused by construction, destruction or development. The current policy to replace trees in kind has been in place for close to ten years, and has resulted in commendable reforestation after severe loss from such projects as gas pipelines, sanitary sewer repair, and building development. Bill 23-0465 will further codify Baltimore's exemplary practice.

In addition, creating a Sustainability Fund as a repository for mitigation funds (when fees-in-lieu must occur in place of replacing a tree at the time of the project) is an excellent idea. We all can be confident such a fund, separate from other line items in Baltimore's budget, will be used exclusively for tree planting, care, and enhancement of our forests. Bill 23-0456 meets that need.

I and my fellow Board members are proud of our respective neighborhoods' and Baltimore City's efforts to promote trees in our parks and along our streets. We encourage you to continue to embrace the fact that trees are a critical part of our forest ecosystems to combat climate change, and that they lower our utility bills, provide a sense of peace and wellness for our citizens, and are a welcome respite for our children.

Sincerely,

Erik Dihle

Erik M. Dihle, Chair

Phone 304-261-7155

