



January 23, 2024

RE: Testimony in Support of a **Favorable Report** on Baltimore City Council Bill No. Bill 23-0465 –Tree Removal on City Property Permits and Procedures

Dear Council Chair McCray and Members of the Baltimore City Council Committee:

On behalf of Baltimore Green Space I encourage you to make a favorable report on City Council Bill 23-0465. This bill will provide legal protections for city trees grounding the current city policy in formal legislation.

We all know that Baltimore City has many special green spaces and parks with tree canopy that helps to cool communities and manage stormwater. Baltimore City Forestry's TreeBaltimore Partnerships are one of the few partnerships in the United States that can boast a tree canopy gain due to efforts of strong planting and conservation partnerships. We have a network of cooperating partners and communities and some of those partners you will see provide testimony here.

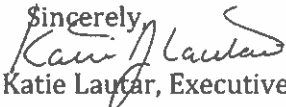
Baltimore Green Space recently embarked on a mapping analysis to inform our conservation plan strategy. We chose to look the intersection of community access, cooling impacts and flooding impacts of the green spaces in Baltimore City from pocket parks to forest patches. What we see is that tree canopy has a measurable and noticeable cooling effect from street trees, to trees over grass, to forest patches. Forest patches are the best at cooling communities and a significant portion of these patches are in parks.

Now more than ever in this era of Climate Change we need more protections ensuring that we not only reach but exceed the city's 40% tree canopy goal. We were able to move from 27% to 28% but we need to continue to move the needle faster. A denser tree canopy has stronger cooling benefits and stormwater management benefits.

Our conservation planning with scientific partners at UMBC, looking at flooding patterns, as compared to tree canopy, impervious cover and green space ratios seems to indicate that neighborhoods with a higher than 40% tree canopy are less likely to have flooding impacts. So while we are making gains in canopy it's possible that our bar was set a little lower than we need to be more climate resilient and cushion communities as these rain patterns produce more flood risks. Also forest patches are better at managing storm water and a significant portion of these patches are in parks.

We respectfully request a **favorable report** on City Council Bill 23-0465. Codifying this policy both protects the city from possible challenges to previous mitigation rates set by the City and helps ensure we don't lose more of our tree canopy without replacement.

Thank you for your dedication and service to the greater good of the Baltimore Community.

Sincerely,

Katie Lautar, Executive Director